



## 2

## VANASPATI SEVA

Vanaspatis refers to plants and trees that grow naturally in the forest without flowering. They fructify directly skipping the step of flowering. Generally, all the plants are called Vanaspatis. In this lesson we will discuss not only about how to recognize Vanaspati or plants but also learn about some important trees and plants.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to :

- define vanaspati;
- categorize the different types of plants and trees;
- name the gods associated with different trees ; and
- identify the medicinal value and importance of some plants.

### 2.1 WHAT IS VANASPATI (PLANTS)

Vanaspatis are plants and trees that grow naturally in the forest without flowering. They fructify directly skipping the step of flowering. Generally, all the plants are called Vanaspatis.



Fig. 2.1 Forest

The forest is a natural environment which accommodates besides trees, a large number of other creatures also. You may see huge trees aged 100 years sometimes. They grow very tall in some forests, while in some other cases, the trees spread wide. The varieties and types of trees grown in different forests depend upon the nature of land, rain and other environmental conditions.

### **I. Types of Plants and Trees**

Have you ever thought who waters the trees and plants in the deep forests? Definitely no governments, NGOs, private organizations etc water them. They grow naturally with rain-water.

Different types of plants and trees have been described and classified in Ayurveda, health science and many texts.

Manu Smriti classifies the plants as:



Notes

	Type	Description	Example
1	Vanaspathi	Fruits without evident flowers	Forest trees
2	Oushadhis	Wither away after fructification	Banana
3	Vriksha	Produces flowers and fruits	
4	Gulmas	Shrubs-Spreads wide with several branches. Grows a few feet above the ground	Nerium
5	Guchhas	Bushy shrubs	Jasmine
6	Trina	Grasses	Durva
7	Pratanas	Creepers spreading on the ground	Watermelon, ash gourd
8	Vallis	Twiners - these climb around other tree for support	



Forest tree



Banana tree

Fig. 2.2 Types of Trees



Notes



Vallis



Pratanas



Grass



Shrubs

Fig. 2.3 Types of Plants

## II. Vrikshayurveda

Vrikshayurveda, medical book for plants, has different taxonomy to offer. What kind of treatment should be offered for plants have been discussed in detail in Vrikshayurved. It's not just enough to keep human beings alone, but animals, birds, plants or any other creatures also should be looked after. This was basic understanding of Bharateeyas. However, Indians have thought very deeply about the nature, forest, resources etc. to understand and support as much as possible.

In a Sanskrit Subhashita the importance of trees and plants is emphasized through this shloka:

वैश्वदेवोऽस्ति शब्दोऽयं कस्यचिदपि नोक्तः ।  
वृक्षोऽपि नोक्तः कस्यचिदपि नोक्तः ।

According to this shloka - There is no sound which cannot be turned into a Mantra and no plant without medicinal value. No man on the earth is useless, but each is rare and wise, capable of discovering and rightly 'employing' all things in the environment in the right manner.

Memorise this shloka and try to understand the importance of each plant.

Indian tradition considers trees to be gods. We worship trees like gods. Five trees listed below are very popular for their divine properties and their association with the Gods:

S.No	Popular Name of the tree	Sanskrit name of the tree	Gods associated
1.	Peepal tree	Ashvattha	All gods
2.	Banyan tree	Vata Vriksha	Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva
3.	Saraca asoca	Ahoka Vriksha	Kama Deva or the God of Love
4.	Indian	gooseberry Amalaki	Dhatri Vriksha/ Motherhood
5.	Bel Tree	Bilva Vriksha	Shiva



Notes



Notes

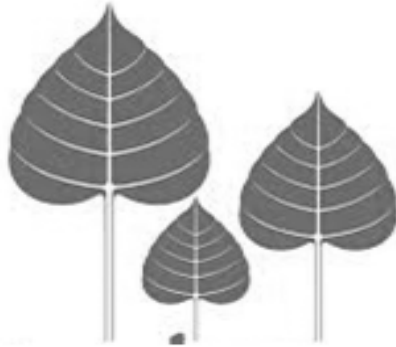


Fig. 2.4 Peepal Tree



Fig. 2.5 Banyan Tree

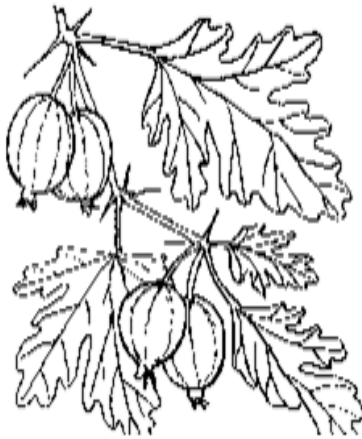


Fig. 2.6 Amalika



Fig. 2.7 Bel



Fig. 2.8 Ashoka Vriksh

These trees are not just considered divine but have great medicinal value also. The trees mentioned in the table are worshiped annually or on specific days or on some festival.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1

Match column A with column B

A	B
1. Oushadhies	(i) Produces flowers and fruits
2. Gucchas	(ii) Shiva
3. Vallis	(iii) Ashvattha
4. Vriksha	(iv) Ashoka Vriksha
5. Peepal tree	(v) Wither away after fructification
6. Saraca asoca	(vi) Twiners
7. Bel Tree	(vii) Shrubs

## 2.2 IMPORTANCE OF TREES AND PLANTS

Every plant has medicinal value. If we are informed about the medicinal properties of the plants we can use them when needed. Vrikshayurved helps us to identify the unique medicinal properties of the different plants around us.

Many medicinal plants can be grown around the houses for their medicinal value. It is very important to remember that to use any plant or tree as a medicine, you also need to consult a doctor before doing so.



Notes



Let us study about some of them.

## I. Tulsi

There are four types of tulsi mentioned in ayurvedic texts i.e. Rama, Krishna, Vana and Kapoor Tulsi.

Tulsi (the queen of herbs) has been known for its remarkable healing properties.



Fig. 2.9 Tulsi

- Tulsi is taken as the herbal tea.
- Juice of its leaves gives relief in cold, fever, bronchitis and cough.
- Many people wears the Tulsi beads, which is said to have certain physical and medicinal properties.

## II. Brahmi

Brahmi plants act on the connective tissue development and stimulates the healing processes. This is used in Ayurveda to :





Fig. 2.10 Brahmi

- revitalize the brain and nervous system.
- increase attention span and concentration.
- treat venous insufficiency.

### III. *Justicia adhatoda* - Vasaka

The root, leaves and flowers of Vasa is used in the form of juice and decoction in Ayurveda to treat

- fever, intrinsic haemorrhage, cough, asthma, consumption, gulma, kustha, obesity, oedema,



Fig. 2.11 *Justicia adhatoda* - Vasaka



## Notes

- skin diseases, pradara, difficult labour, vomiting, piles, pox, retention of urine, diseases of mouth and as rasayana.

#### IV. Basil - Kamakasturi

You must have used basil lot of times in food to heal flatulence.

It has the power to help:

- Increases the appetite
- Reduces stomach gas



Fig. 2.12 Basil

#### V. Lemon Grass

Lemon grass has been reported to have innumerable therapeutic and other health benefits.

- lemon grass inhibits bacteria and yeast growth.
- beneficial for nervous and stress-related conditions.



Fig. 2.13 Lemon Grass



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

State whether true or false

1. Medicinal plants cannot be grown around the houses
2. Vrikshayurved helps us to identify the unique medicinal properties of the different plants
3. Vasa is used in the form of juice and decoction in Ayurveda to treat fever and intrinsic haemorrhage.
4. Lemon grass is beneficial for nervous and stress-related conditions
5. Basil has the power to decrease the appetite



## WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT

- Vanaspatis are plants and trees naturally grown in the forest without flowering. They fructify directly skipping the step of flowers. Generally, all the plants are called Vanaspatis.
- The forest is a natural organism which accommodates large number of other creatures.
- There are different types of plants and trees identified in Ayurveda, health science and many other texts.
- These trees are not just considered divine but utilized for medicines also.
- Some medicinal plants which can be grown around the houses

Notes





Notes

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. Tabulate and show the classification of trees as given by Manu Smriti.
2. List five important trees and the names of Gods associated with them.
3. What are the medicinal benefits of Brahmi?
4. In what form can we use Justicia adhatoda - Vasaka?
5. In what ways is taking lemon grass beneficial?

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****2.1**

1. - (v)
2. - (vii)
3. - (vi)
4. - (i)
5. - (iii)
6. - (iv)
7. - (ii)

**2.2**

1. False
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. False