

# *Emblica officinalis Gaertn.*



**Family:** Euphorbiaceae

**Common names:** Emblic  
myrobalan

**Local name:** Aonla  
(Joshimath), Amla (Hindi)

**Ayurvedic name:** Amlaki,  
Dhatriphala

## Plant profile:

This plant is a deciduous tree that grows up to a height of 12 m. The leaves are 1 cm x 0.2 cm, small narrowly linear and pinnate. The flowers are yellowish and axillary, fascicled on lower leaves. The fruits are fleshy, globular, smooth and pale yellowish green in colour with an obovate-obtusely triangular, three-celled nut, each cell containing two seeds. It is distributed through out tropical and sub-tropical India, chiefly in the dry deciduous forests ascending up to 1350 m in the Himalaya. In Himachal Pradesh, it is frequented in dry deciduous forests in Nahan, Nalagarh, Solan and Rajpur divisions. Flowering takes place from March-May and fruiting occurs in December-February. The plant can be propagated through seeds or grafting. A full-grown tree yields 190-300 kg fruits per year on an average.

## Medicinal uses:

- **Parts used:** Fruits and seeds
- **Active principles:** It is rich source of vitamin C. The seeds contain fixed oil and phosphatides. The fruits and leaves contain tannins, polyphenolic compounds, 1,3,6, trigalloylglucose, tercheffin, corialgin, phyllantidine and phyllantine.
- **Disease cured and Dosage:**
  - **Ethnomedicinal:** It is diuretic, laxative, cardiac, astringent and liver tonic. It is useful in anaemia, diarrhoea, dysentery, dyspepsia, haemorrhage, inflammation of the eyes, jaundice, leucorrhoea and menorrhagia. Vaid in Joshimath use it for treating flatulence and stomachache. The fresh fruits work as a refrigerant, diuretic and laxative and are carminative and stomachic. The dried fruit is sour and astringent and is useful in haemorrhage, diarrhoea, and dysentery. Its iron content makes it a valuable remedy against anaemia. The flowers are cooling and aperient. A powder of *Emblīca* seeds with and red sandal is given with honey to stop nausea and vomiting. The seeds are fried in ghee and ground to apply as a lepa over the forehead to stop nose bleeding.
  - **Ethnoveterinary:** Data not sufficient
- **Ayurveda:** Chyavanprash, Brihmmarasayan, Dhatriloh, Triphla. Prescribed dose: churna 3-6 g.
- **Ayurvedic properties and actions:**
  - Guna (qualities): Guru (heavy), ruksha (dry), sheet (cold)
  - Rasa (taste): Madhur (sweet), amla (sour), katu (pungent), tikta (bitter), kashaya (astringent)
  - Vipaka (post digestive taste): Madhur (sweet)
  - Virya (potency): Sheet (cold)

As per Charaka Samhita it is considered as vayasthapan (longevity promoters) and virechanopag (purgative).

- **Therapeutic description:**
  - Effect on humours: Alleviates vata, pitta, kapha but it is especially effective for pittaj diseases.
  - Systemic effects: It is used to treat headache (pittaj), retention of urine, (apply paste locally), ophthalmic disease (expressed juice), alopecia and greying of hair (head wash with pulp).
  - Nervous system: Cures nervine debility, sensory debility and gradual loss of vision.
  - Respiratory system: Treats cough, dyspnoea and tuberculosis.
  - Digestive system: It is used in the treatment of dyspepsia, digestive upsets, constipation, liver impairments, hyperacidity, intestinal colic, flatulence and piles.
  - Blood vascular system: It treats cardiac diseases and blood disorders.
  - Urino-genital system: It is used in the treatment of spermatorrhoea, leucorrhoea, uterine weakness, dysurea, incontinence of urine and pittaj prameha.
  - Skin: treats leprosy, erysipelas and other skin diseases.
  - Temperature: It is used to cure chronic fever.
  - It is very effective for geriatric diseases and is widely used as a general tonic.
  
- **Drug preparation:** To convert the plant into a drug, the dried fruits are crushed with black salt and Timur bark.
  - The drug is in the form of a grayish black coloured powder.
  - It must be stored in airtight containers.
  - The powder has a shelf life of one year.
  - It can be externally used as a paste or in baths (for washing hair). For internal use, it can be chewed, ingested or taken as eye drops.