

Terminalia bellirica



Family: Combretaceae

Common names: Bahera /
Belliric-myrobalan

Local name: Bahera, Bahira,
Vibhitaki, Bibhitak (Joshimath),
Bahera (Hindi)

Ayurvedic name: Bibhitak,
Karshphal, Kalidrum

Plant profile:

It is a large deciduous tree growing up to a height of 20-30 m tall. The leaves are alternate, entire, smooth, stalked, broadly ovate with cuneate base and clustered at the end of the branches. The flowers are small, pale green in colour and have an offensive odour. The fruits are 2-3 cm long, ovoid and have hard stones with a sweet oily kernel. The tree is found in deciduous forests throughout India with an exception of arid regions. In Himachal Pradesh, it is sporadic in the Siwaliks and is generally seen planted near villages and field borders. Flowering occurs in April-June and fruiting in November-February. The tree is a common associate of Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and teak (*Tectona grandis*) and occurs more or less scattered in moist valleys. The tree is a light demander but young seedlings are known to tolerate fairly heavy shade when young.

Medicinal uses:

- **Parts used:** Fruits
- **Active principles:** The active constituents are tannins, β - sitosterol, gallic acid, ellagic acid, chebulagic acid and a number of free sugars. The kernels yield oil, which contains palmitic, oleic and linoleic acids.
- **Disease cured and dosage:**
 - **Ethnomedicinal:** The fruits are bitter, astringent, anthelmintic, pungent, and laxative and are used in the treatment of piles, enlargement of spleen, diarrhoea, eye troubles, leprosy and headache. The kernel is said to be narcotic. The fruits are taken during cough, hoarseness, throat troubles, scorpion stings and skin diseases.
 - **Ethnoveterinary:** Data not sufficient
- **Ayurveda:** Vibhitak taila, triphala churna, phalrikadi-kwath, talishadi churna, lavangadi-vati. Prescribed dose: 3-6 g
- **Ayurvedic properties and actions:**
 - Guna (qualities): Ruksha (dry), laghu (light)
 - Rasa (taste): Kashaya (astringent)
 - Vipaka (post digestive taste): Madhur (sweet)
 - Virya (potency): Ushna (hot)

As per Charaka Samhita it is considered a jwarahara (antipyretic) and virechanopag (purgative).

- **Therapeutic description:**
 - Effect on humours: Alleviates vata, pitta, kapha but it is especially effective against kafaj diseases

- Systemic effects: It relieves pain and inflammation (paste and seed oil), skin diseases, leucoderma, greying of hair (seed oil), acute open wound (churna as a haemostatic) and conjunctivitis (paste).
 - Nervous system: It is used to treat paralysis, paresis, hemiplegia, insomnia and other vataj diseases and nervine debility.
 - Respiratory system: It is used in the treatment of catarrh, dyspnoea, cough, and hoarseness of voice.
 - Digestive system: It is also used to cure dyspepsia, flatulence, pathogenic-thirst, vomiting, piles, worms infestation, digestive upsets, constipation (partially ripe fruit) and in diarrhoea (ripened dry fruit).
 - Blood vascular system: it is used in the treatment of internal haemorrhage and haemoptysis.
 - Urino-genital system: It is used as a cure for impotency.
 - Temperature: it is used to cure mild fever.
- **Drug preparation:** To convert the plant into a drug, the fruits are dried and powdered.
 - It is mixed with amla and harad powder to prepare a medicine called Triphala.
 - It must be stored in moist free airtight containers.
 - The shelf life of the medicine is 1-2 years.
 - Externally, it can be applied as a paste, oil or churna. For internal use it can be chewed or directly ingested.