

Indian laurel tree

The Indian laurel tree, scientifically known as *Ficus microcarpa*, is a native species of India that belongs to the family Moraceae. The tree is commonly known as ‘Chinese banyan’ and is known for its fast growth and hardy nature. The Indian laurel tree is widely cultivated in India and has a significant ecological and economic role in the country.

Tree Characteristics	Description
Common Name	Indian laurel tree
Scientific name	<i>Ficus microcarpa</i>
Maximum height	Up to 25 meters
Diameter of crown	Up to 100 meters
Diameter of trunk	Up to 2 meters
Years to mature	10-15 years
Economic benefit to farmers	Improves soil fertility, provides shade for crops, and a valuable source of fodder for livestock. Figs of the tree are also a valuable source of income for farmers as they can be sold in local markets.

Physical characteristics

The Indian laurel tree can grow up to 25 meters in height, with a spreading canopy that can cover an area of up to 100 meters. The tree has a broad trunk with a diameter of up to 2 meters, and it has aerial roots that can grow downwards to reach the soil, allowing the tree to anchor itself firmly. The branches of the Indian laurel tree grow in a twisted and gnarled pattern, and the leaves are glossy and dark green in color.

Ecological role

The Indian laurel tree plays a crucial ecological role in India by providing shelter, food, and nesting sites for a wide range of animals, birds, and insects. The tree is known to support a diverse range of wildlife, including several species of birds, such as mynahs, parakeets, and bulbuls, as well as squirrels and other small mammals.

Importance to birds, animals, and insects

The Indian laurel tree provides an important source of food for many species of birds and animals. The tree produces small, green figs that are a valuable food source for many bird species, and the leaves of the tree provide a nutritious food source for grazing animals, such as cattle and goats. Additionally, the tree's flowers and fruit attract a range of insects, including bees and butterflies, which are important pollinators.

Climatic conditions:

The Indian laurel tree grows well in a wide range of soils, including loam, clay, and sandy soils, and it prefers well-draining soils that are rich in organic matter. The tree thrives in warm, tropical climates and requires a minimum temperature of 15 degrees Celsius to grow well. The tree can tolerate a wide range of climatic conditions, including hot and humid conditions, and it is well adapted to drought conditions.

States in India where the tree is

found naturally

The Indian laurel tree is found naturally in many states in India, including Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. The tree is also widely cultivated in other parts of the country, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Rajasthan.

Different stages of tree growth

The Indian laurel tree goes through several stages of growth, starting from a seedling and growing into a mature tree over several years. The tree begins to produce aerial roots at an early stage of growth, which helps it to anchor itself firmly in the soil. As the tree grows, it develops a broad canopy with twisted and gnarled branches.

How farmers are benefited

Farmers can benefit significantly by growing the Indian laurel tree under agroforestry systems. The tree is known to improve soil fertility, prevent soil erosion, and provide shade for crops. Additionally, the tree produces a valuable source of fodder for livestock, and the figs of the tree are a valuable source of income for farmers, as they can be sold in local markets.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Indian laurel tree is a valuable species of tree in India, with significant ecological and economic benefits. The tree provides important habitat and food sources for a wide range of wildlife, and it is well adapted to a range of climatic and soil conditions. Farmers can benefit significantly from growing the tree under agroforestry systems, as it can improve soil fertility and provide a

valuable source of income.