



PLANTS IN THE RAMAYANA AND THEIR AYURVEDIC SIGNIFICANCE

Madiraju Sushma

Research Scholar, National Sanskrit University, Tirupati

ABSTRACT

The Rāmāyaṇa, composed by Sage Vālmīki, is not only a spiritual and historical epic but also a rich source of information on flora and their medicinal significance. Many plants mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa are revered in Ayurveda for their healing properties. This article explores key plants cited in the text, along with their contextual roles and Ayurvedic values, supported by Sanskrit verses and explanations.

plants mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa, along with their Sanskrit ślokas, Ayurvedic values, and botanical names.

1. Sanjīvanī – Selaginella bryopteris : Śloka (Yuddha Kāṇḍa 74.33):

संजीवनीं च विशल्यां च सौवर्णकरणीं तथा ।
 संधानकं च पश्यस्व यदि किञ्चिद् ददृशः प्रभो ॥

Context: Hanumān brings Sanjīvanī to save Lakṣmaṇa.

Ayurvedic Use: Rejuvenative (Rasāyana), neuroprotective, and adaptogenic.

2. Aśoka – Saraca asoca : Śloka (Sundara Kāṇḍa 15.26):

प्रविश्य तु विशालाक्षी शिंशपावृक्षमाश्रिता ।
 ओकवनिकां नाम राक्षसीभिः समावृता ॥

Context: Sītā was kept under an Aśoka tree in Aśoka Vātikā.

Ayurvedic Use: Gynecological tonic, especially in menorrhagia and leucorrhea.



🌿 3. Arjuna – Terminalia arjuna : Śloka (Kishkindhā Kāṇḍa 1.21):

न्यग्रोधं च महावेगं बिल्वं बदरिपादनम् ।
 अश्वत्थं चापि सुप्राप्तं सन्तानकमथापि च ॥

Inferred Context: Sacred tree in Panchavati region.

Ayurvedic Use: Excellent for cardiac conditions (Hṛdya), healing fractures.

🌳 4. Aśvattha – Ficus religiosa : Śloka (Kishkindhā Kāṇḍa 1.21):

अश्वत्थं चापि सुप्राप्तं सन्तानकमथापि च ॥

Context: Mentioned among forest flora.

Ayurvedic Use: Bark and latex are cooling and astringent, used in bleeding disorders.

🌳 5. Nyagrodha – Ficus benghalensis (Banyan Tree) : Śloka (Kishkindhā Kāṇḍa 1.21):

न्यग्रोधं च महावेगं बिल्वं बदरिपादनम्॥

Context: Majestic tree offering shade in the forest.

Ayurvedic Use: Latex and bark useful in diabetes, dysentery, and female health.

🌿 6. Bilva – Aegle marmelos : Śloka (Kishkindhā Kāṇḍa 1.21):

न्यग्रोधं च महावेगं बिल्वं बदरिपादनम्॥

Context: Present in Panchavati region.

Ayurvedic Use: Digestive aid (Dīpana), anti-diarrheal (Grahi), anti-inflammatory.

🌳 7. Śāla – Shorea robusta : Śloka (Aranya Kāṇḍa 5.14):

सालतालसमाकीर्णं बहुपादपकाननम् ।
 पुष्पितह्रमसङ्घुष्टं बहुकुञ्जशिलाश्रयम् ॥

Context: Common tree in Dandakāranya forest.

Ayurvedic Use: Resin used for wound healing, anti-inflammatory preparations.

🌿 8. Mustā – Cyperus rotundus :

Not directly named, but likely present in forest regions.

Ayurvedic Use: Used in fever, diarrhoea, indigestion.



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Rasa: Tikta, Kaṭu; Karma: Jvaraghna, Dīpana.

9. Harītakī – Terminalia chebula

Likely used by sages in the forest.

Ayurvedic Use: Rejuvenative, digestive, mild laxative, Rasāyana.

Mentioned in: Ayurvedic texts as a divine fruit.

10. Tulasi – Ocimum sanctum

Though not in Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa, referenced in devotional Ramayana texts.

Ayurvedic Use: Respiratory health, fever, immunity, mental clarity.

11. Kuśa Grass – Eragrostis cynosuroides : Śloka (Bāla Kāṇḍa 15.9):

कुशान् समाहितान् कृत्वा ब्राह्मणान् समुपानयत् ।

स्नात्वा च विधिवद्वाजः कुशैः समुपवेश्य तान् ॥

Context: Rituals by Daśaratha and sages.

Use: Ritualistic and spiritually purifying; not medicinal.

12. Japa – Hibiscus rosa-sinensis

Not named directly but inferred in flower descriptions.

Ayurvedic Use: Menstrual health, cooling, improves hair growth.

13. Mandāra – Erythrina indica : Śloka (Sundara Kāṇḍa 15.20):

सुपुष्पिताग्रांश्च विशालकेशरान्

मन्दरप्रतीकाश्च महाद्गुमान्॥

Context: Described among beautiful trees in Ashoka Vātikā.

Ayurvedic Use: Flowers and bark used for skin and wound healing.

14. Agnimantha – Premna integrifolia

Part of Dashamūla; likely present in forest flora.

Ayurvedic Use: Pain relief, inflammation, Vata disorders.



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15. Śatāvarī – *Asparagus racemosus*

Inferred in Vanavāsa herbs used by sages.

Ayurvedic Use: Female reproductive tonic, immunity booster, Rasāyana.

Conclusion:

The Rāmāyaṇa preserves not only the dhārmic and cultural ethos of ancient India, but also serves as a subtle botanical record. These sacred trees and herbs reflect the ancient seers' knowledge of Ayurveda, ecology, and sustainable forest life.

Sources:

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