

## *Azadirachta indica* (Neem)

### Classification

Kingdom: Plantae

Clade: Tracheophytes

Clade: Angiosperms

Clade: Eudicots

Clade: Rosids

Order: Sapindales

Family: Meliaceae

Genus: *Azadirachta*

Species: *indica*



### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

**Height:** It is a fast-growing tree that can reach a height of 15-20m, occasionally reaching 35-40m. It is mainly green but can shed during the dry season.

**Leaf:** The compound(pinnate) leaves have alternate, 20-40 cm long, dark green colours.

**Flower:** The small fragrant white flowers are bisexual and are borne in clusters on the axils of leaves.

**Fruit:** The fruit is olive green sweet flavoured pulp.

### DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

It is native to the subcontinent and to parts of Southeast Asia but naturalised and grown around the world in tropical and subtropical areas.

### CULTIVATION AND USES

The plant has also been used for Ayurvedic purposes since centuries. It is used in medicinal and cosmetic fields based on its antibacterial and antifungal properties. Neem is used in shampoos for treating dandruff and soaps or creams for skin conditions such as acne dark spots itching etc. Leaves have been used as a traditional treatment for diabetes and help to control blood sugar level. Oil extracted from the seeds can be used directly as an insect and mite repellent. Neem based pesticides have low toxicity hence it is harmless to mammals and are in organic farming applications.

### INTERESTING FACTS

The consumption of neem oil during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage. Over intake can lower the blood sugar level. It causes infertility.