

***Dillenia indica* (Elephant apple)**

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae

Clade: Tracheophytes

Clade: Angiosperms

Clade: Eudicots

Order: Dilleniales

Family: Dilleniaceae

Genus: *Dillenia*

Species: *indica*



PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

It is an evergreen large shrub or small to medium-sized tree.

Trunk: Grayish-brown bark with deep furrows with stout, spreading branches.

Leaves: The leaves are with a conspicuously corrugated surface with impressed veins.

Flower: The flowers are large, with five white petals.

Fruit: Its fruits are large, round and greenish yellow consisting of 15 carpels together.

DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

The Elephant Apple is native to tropical Asia, specifically the Indian subcontinent and South-East Asia, and has been introduced to Pacific Islands and tropical Africa. It thrives in various habitats, including tropical forests, deciduous forests, evergreen forests, plains, hills, coastal areas, and riverine forests. Its widespread distribution and ability to tolerate diverse environments make it a common sight in tropical regions.

CULTIVATION AND USES

It grows in tropical and subtropical regions with high humidity and warm temperatures. It prefers well-drained soil. It requires consistent moisture, especially during fruiting. It is used as a source of food and medicine. Its wood is valued for furniture-making and construction. Fruit pulp and bark is used as a natural dye.

INTERESTING FACTS

Elephant Apple is a large tree, growing up to 15 meters tall. Fruit is large, green or yellowish, with a sweet and slightly acidic taste. The fruit pulp is rich in vitamins A and C, potassium, and antioxidants.