Peepal

Ficus religiosa

Code: XIM-T-020 **Location:** XIM University Campus **Local / Vernacular name:** ଅଶ୍ୱତ୍ଥ

Description

XIM University campus biodiversity register (2026–27). Recorded individuals: 6; abundance rank: 12.

Botanical Details

Leaf habit: Deciduous or semi evergreen Flowers / Fruits: The flowers of the peepal tree are not visible externally, as they grow inside a fig-like structure called a syconium. These small flowers later develop into small purple or black figs that attract birds and animals. Native range: The peepal tree is native to the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.

Uses & Importance

Ecological: It provides shelter and food to a wide variety of birds, insects, and small animals, making it an important component of local ecosystems. The fruits and flowers support birds, pollinators, and other fauna, while the dense foliage and sturdy structure offer nesting, roosting, and refuge from predators and harsh weather. Its large canopy creates extensive shade, which helps cool the surrounding environment, reduces surface temperatures, and moderates the local microclimate, especially in urban and semi-urban areas. In addition, the tree improves air quality by absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide during photosynthesis and trapping dust and pollutants on its leaves, thereby contributing to carbon sequestration, oxygen release, and overall environmental health.

Medicinal: Its bark, leaves, and fruits are widely believed in traditional medicine to possess therapeutic properties and are used to treat a range of ailments. Preparations made from the bark are commonly used for asthma and inflammatory conditions, helping to ease respiratory discomfort and swelling. The leaves and fruits are traditionally used in remedies for diabetes, as they are thought to help regulate blood sugar levels. In addition, extracts from these plant parts are applied in the treatment of skin diseases, where their antimicrobial and healing properties aid in soothing infections and promoting tissue repair. They are also used to address digestive problems such as diarrhea and stomach disorders, as well as to reduce inflammation, highlighting the plant’s importance in ethnomedicine and its potential value for further pharmacological research.

Cultural: The peepal tree (Ficus religiosa) holds profound religious and cultural significance and is widely believed to be the abode of gods in Indian tradition. According to Buddhist belief, Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment while meditating under a peepal tree, which thereafter came to be known as the Bodhi Tree, making it one of the most sacred symbols in Buddhism. In Hinduism, the tree is associated with several deities and is regarded as a living

embodiment of divine presence. People often worship the peepal tree by offering water, lighting lamps, and performing circumambulation, seeking prosperity, good health, longevity, and spiritual well-being. Beyond its spiritual importance, the peepal tree also represents harmony between humans and nature, symbolizing wisdom, continuity of life, and the interconnectedness of the natural and spiritual worlds.

Location

GPS: 20.15860192, 85.76535449

Directions: https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&travelmode=walking&destination=20.15860192%2C85.76535449