

Flowering Trees



Melia azedarach L. (Hindi: Ghora neem or Mahanim) of Meliaceae is a moderate-size (upto 40 ft. high) deciduous tree with thick trunk, large crown of spreading branches and furrowed greenish-brown bark (picture shows a young specimen). Leaves are 10-20 in. long, twice compound bearing numerous dark-green, oblique and toothed leaflets. Flowers are lilac, small and fragrant in open long-stalked branched inflorescence. Stamens are fused into a purple staminal tube that is toothed. Fruit is about 0.5 in. across, nearly globose, generally 5-seeded, green but yellow when ripe, quite smooth at first but wrinkled in drying, remaining long on the tree after ripening.

The species is widely natural but occasionally cultivated for firewood as it grows very fast. The bark is very bitter and is used as an anthelmintic. Heartwood is reddish brown and takes good polish and hence used for carpentry. Leaves are lopped for fodder.