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*Justicia adhatoda*

[Synonyms : *Adhatoda duvernoia*, *Adhatoda vasica*, *Adhatoda zeylanica*, *Duvernoia adhatodoides*, *Justicia vasica*]

**MALABAR NUT** is an evergreen shrub. Native to India and Sri Lanka it has purple-streaked, white flowers.

It is also known as *Adatoda* (German), *Adatodai* (Tamil), *Adasaramu* (Telugu), *Adhatoda*, *Adulasa* (Hindi), *Adulsa* (Marathi), *Adusa* (English, Hindi), *Adusoge* (Kannada), *Alduso* (Gujarati), *Atalotakam* (Malayalam), *Bahaka* (Assamese), *Bakas* (Hindi), Malabar nut tree, *Pavettai* (Tamil), Pistol bush, *Vasaka* (Bengali, German, Sanskrit), and *Wanepala* (Sinhalese).

The woody fruit explode when mature to eject the seeds.

Warning – large doses can be poisonous and can cause diarrhoea and vomiting. The plant can be poisonous for some insects and fish.

*Adhatoda* is derived from Tamil or Sinhalese *ada* (goat) and *thodai* (not touching) components with reference to bitter-tasting leaves.

Coarse cloth (and skin) has been dyed yellow by using the boiled leaves, and the leaves have been an ingredient in a black pottery dye.

Malabar nut has been one of the shrubs planted in land reclamation schemes.

Leaves (in infusion) have been used as an insecticide, and have also provided a green manure for paddy fields . They have been used as packing around immature fruit not only to repel insects but also to accelerate the ripening process.

Apart from charcoal for gunpowder the moderately hard, white wood is also fashioned into beads. It has been used locally for fuel and the wood ash has been used for washing clothes.

Medicinally, the roots and leaves have long been used in India to treat asthma, intermittent fever, coughs, bronchitis and lung diseases, and the latter have also been an ingredient in remedies for rheumatism. (In the past the dried leaves have been used by European herbalists to treat diphtheria and typhoid.)