Semecarpus anacardium Linn.f.

(Bibba, Bhallataka)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and taxonomy:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific name</td>
<td><em>Semecarpus anacardium</em> Linn.f.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Anacardiaceae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Name</td>
<td>Bibba (Marathi); Bhilawa, Bhallatak (Hindi)</td>
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<td>Threat status</td>
<td>Rare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade name</td>
<td>Marking nut/ Dhobi nut.</td>
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| Habit: | A moderate to large sized deciduous tree attaining height of 12 m - 15 m, with large stiff leaves. Leaves crowded at the ends of branches, alternate 20-60 cm long and 10-30 cm broad, obovate/oblong with prominent secondary nerves. The tree is leafless in March-April. Bark 2-5 cm thick, dusky gray, blackish, with irregular quadrangular plates separated by narrow longitudinal furrows. In old trees bark is rough with exfoliating scales. Inner surface of bark is red, exuding juice which blackens on exposure. |

| Distribution, habitat and climatic conditions: | The tree is widely distributed throughout the hotter part of India. It is frequent in dry deciduous forests of central India. Common in dry deciduous forests of Maharashtra spreading over Khandesh, Marathwada and East Maharashtra. |


Seeds: It yields bhilawa nut shell liquid used for marking. Bark is astringent in nature. It exudes gum resin used in leprous infection |

| Uses and Economic returns: | The stem yields, by tapping, an acrid, viscid juice from which a varnish is prepared. The nut yields a powerful and bitter substance used everywhere in India as a substitute for marking ink for clothes by washermen, hence it is frequently called Dhobi Nut. It gives a black colour to cotton fabrics, but before application it must be mixed with limewater as a fixator. The fruits are also used as a dye. They are also used in ayurveda medicines as astringent, heat generating, appetizer, digestant, rejuvenative, aphrodisiac herb and alleviates the skin and rheumatic disorders. |
The fleshy cups on which the nuts rest and the kernels of the nuts are eaten. Tree is also host plant for lac insect. Kernel oil is used as lubricant as well as wood preservative against termites.

**Flowering:**
Occurs in May-June. Flowers dioecious, small upto 0.8 cm, dull greenish yellow in terminal panicles.

**Seed collection :**
Fruits (drupe) obliquely ovoid more than 1 cm girth and 2.5 cm length fleshy hydnocarp with attached nut/seed. Kernel present inside hard shell is edible but sometimes causes cutaneous eruptions. Fruits Seeds are collected between December to March. 460-880 seeds/kg. Orange coloured receptacle turns black after drying.

**Collection method:**
Manual collection/ picking up.

**Seed extraction/ pre-sowing treatment:**
Nuts treated with conc. Sulphuric acid for 15 minutes. Viability 6-9 months hence seeds sown immediately after collection.

**Seed storage:**
Storage not recommended due to less viability.

**Nursery techniques/ propagation**
Seeds sown in polybags in December and germination 30-50 percent noticed within 15-27 days.

**Silviculture/ Planting techniques:**
One year old saplings planted in field in 45 cm deep pits. Bibba is also good coppice. Natural regeneration also obtainable from stool coppice.

**Harvesting/ Extraction:**
Kernels of moderate aged tree collected. Bhilawa nut shell liquid obtained by extracting nuts with organic solvent or hot expression

**Special thing to mention:**
Bibba is used both, internally as well as externally. The fruits, their oil and the seeds have great medicinal value, and are used to treat the wide range of diseases.

Externally, the oil, mixed with coconut or sesame oil, is applied on wounds and sores to prevent the pus formation. It soothens and heals the cracked feet, when mixed with Sal (*Shorea robusta*). For better healing of wounds, it works well, when medicated with...
garlic, onion and ajavayana in sesame oil.

The topical application of its oil and swollen joints and traumatic wounds effectively controls the pain. In glandular swellings and filariasis, the application of its oil facilitates to drain out the discharges of pus and fluids and eases the conditions.

Internally, bhallataka is widely used in a vast range of diseases because of its multifarious properties. It is extremely beneficial in the diseases like piles, colitis, diarrhea, dyspepsia, ascites, tumours and worms. It augments the appetite, cleanses the bowels, dispels the trapped gases and eliminates the worms.