

## *Ficus benghalensis*

### Scientific classification

Kingdom : Plantae  
Clade : Angiosperms  
Order : Rosales  
Family : Moraceae  
Genus : *Ficus*  
Species : *F. benghalensis*



*Ficus benghalensis*

### DESCRIPTION

*Ficus benghalensis*, commonly known as the **banyan**, **banyan fig** and **Indian banyan**, is a tree native to the **Indian Subcontinent**. Specimens in India are among the largest trees in the world by canopy coverage. *Ficus benghalensis* is an evergreen tree with a wide, spreading crown; it can grow 20 - 30 metres or more tall. The plant usually begins life as an epiphyte, growing in the branch of another tree; as it grows older it sends down aerial roots which, when they reach the ground quickly form roots and become much thicker and more vigorous. They supply nutrients to the fig, allowing it to grow faster than the host tree. The aerial roots gradually encircle the host tree, preventing its main trunk from expanding, whilst at the same time the foliage smothers the foliage of the host. Eventually the host dies, leaving the fig to carry on growing without competition. It can become a very large, spreading tree in time, with some specimens several hundred metres across and producing aerial roots from the spreading branches that eventually become new trunks and allow the crown to spread even further

The tree is harvested from the wild for its edible fruit and medicinal uses. It also supplies a timber and a material for tying. The tree is considered sacred by Hindus and is commonly planted for religious purposes, it is also grown as an ornamental and to provide shade along roads as well as in parks and large gardens.

### **Medicinal Uses and Properties:**

According to Ayurveda, it is astringent to bowels; useful in treatment of biliousness, ulcers, erysipelas, vomiting, vaginal complaints, fever, inflammations, leprosy. According to Unani system of medicine, its latex is aphrodisiac, tonic, vulnerary, maturant, lessens inflammations; useful in piles, nose-diseases, gonorrhoea etc. The aerial root is styptic, useful in syphilis, biliousness, dysentery, inflammation of liver etc.