

Azadirachta indica

Scientific classification

Kingdom : Plantae
Class : Dicotyledons
Order : Sapindales
Family : Meliaceae
Genus : *Azadirachta*
Species : *A. indica*



Azadirachta indica

DESCRIPTION:

Neem is a fast-growing tree that can reach a height of 15–20 metres (49–66 ft), and rarely 35–40 metres (115–131 ft). It is evergreen, but in severe drought it may shed most or nearly all of its leaves. The branches are wide and spreading. The fairly dense crown is roundish and may reach a diameter of 20–25 metres (66–82 ft). The neem tree is very similar in appearance to its relative, the Chinaberry (*Melia azedarach*). The opposite, pinnate leaves are 20–40 centimetres (7.9–15.7 in) long, with 20 to 30 medium to dark green leaflets about 3–8 centimetres (1.2–3.1 in) long. The terminal leaflet often is missing. The petioles are short.

The (white and fragrant) flowers are arranged in more-or-less drooping axillary panicles which are up to 25 centimetres (9.8 in) long. The inflorescences, which branch up to the third degree, bear from 250 to 300 flowers. An individual flower is 5–6 millimetres (0.20–0.24 in) long and 8–11 millimetres (0.31–0.43 in) wide. Protandrous, bisexual flowers and male flowers exist on the same individual tree.

MEDICINAL USES:

Products made from neem trees have been used in the traditional medicine of India for centuries. Insufficient research has been done to assess such purported benefits of neem. In adults, no specific doses have been established, and short-term use of neem appears to be safe, while long-term use may harm the kidneys or liver; in small children, neem oil is toxic and can lead to death. Neem may also cause miscarriages, infertility, and low blood sugar.