

Rose Apple- Evergreen Tree

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Botanical name: The rose apple or malabar plum (*Syzygium jambos* (L.) Alston. syn. *Eugenia jambos*, *Jambosa vulgaris* DC.).

Family: Myrtaceae

Rose apple is an attractive evergreen tree and grows up to 9 m high. It has a long history of cultivation in Malaysian Archipelago and India and grows wild in these areas. Domestication probably occurred in Malaysia from where it moved to southern and later north-eastern India where it is now naturalized. In India, it is grown in Assam, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Gujara.

The rose scented fruits are eaten raw or used to prepare preserves, candies and jellies. The fruit is rich in pectin. A yellow essential oil can be steam-distilled from the leaves, which is used in perfume industry.

Botany: The young leaves are dark green, glossy, oblong-lanceolate, 10-20 cm long, acuminate, thick and short petioled. The flowers are greenish white, 6-8 cm in size and appear in short terminal corymbs.



Variety

Arka Neelachal Akshay: Arka Neelachal Akshay, a high yielding variety of rose apple, has been developed through seedling selection at Central Horticultural Experiment Station (ICAR-II HR), Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The variety has been released by the ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bengaluru, Karnataka on the basis of its quality, drought tolerance and market potential.

Culture: Rose apple prefers a deep loamy soil but performs well even in poorer soils. It cannot tolerate a high water table. Plants show chlorosis in highly calcareous soils having pH 8. It is propagated by seeds, which are polyembryonic. The sexual and asexual seedlings are

difficult to distinguish. Budding and layering methods have been developed but are not widely used. Shield and forkert budding are also successful during the rainy season. *S. pycnanthum* Merr. and Perry and *S. samarangense* (Blume) Merr. and perry can also serve as rootstocks. Planting is done at 6-8 m spacing. Adequate shade must be provided to the plants during the early stages of growth to avoid drying out by the sun. Timely weeding and regular fertilization are needed to produce good crops.



Medicinal Uses: In India, the fruit is considered as a tonic for the brain and liver. A distillation of the fruit behaves as a diuretic. A sweetened preparation of the flowers is considered to lessen a fever. The leaf decoction is used to sore eyes, also works as a diuretic and expectorant and cure for rheumatism.

