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Amla (*Emblica officinalis*): Traditional Wisdom and Modern Value Addition

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Amla (*Emblica officinalis*), also known as Indian gooseberry, is a highly valued medicinal plant in traditional Indian systems like Ayurveda, Unani, and Siddha. Revered for its rejuvenating and immunity-boosting properties. Amla is used in both therapeutic and culinary applications. India is the world's leading producer, with Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh being major contributors. Amla rich in Vitamin C, phenols, iron and antioxidants. Amla's nutritional profile supports its use in a wide range of value-added products. The post-harvest technologies such as preserving, candy making, juicing and pickling enhance shelf life, reduce wastage and increase farmer profitability. These value-added products play a crucial role in improving rural livelihoods and boosting agro-based entrepreneurship, especially among women and small-scale processors.

Key words: Amla, post-harvest technology and value addition of amla.

Introduction

Numerous therapeutic plants have been utilized for centuries in Indian traditional medical systems such as Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha, with the majority of medicines having a unique herbal base. Among these, Amalaki (*Emblica officinalis*) holds a prominent and revered place in Ayurveda, the indigenous medical system of India (Shrivastava *et al.*, 2022). Commonly known as Phyllanthus emblica or Indian gooseberry, it belongs to the Euphorbiaceae family (Yadav *et al.*, 2023) and is often referred to as "Amrutphal" or the divine fruit of immortality due to its extraordinary health benefits (Singh *et al.*, 2019). It is called Nellikai in Tamil, Avala in Marathi, Nelli in Kannada and Amalaki in Sanskrit, reflecting its deep cultural integration across regions and languages. The significance of Amla is not limited to medicinal use alone; it is also esteemed for its spiritual and ritualistic value, as highlighted in ancient religious texts including the Ramayana, Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita and several other classical Ayurvedic scriptures. In Ayurveda, Amla is primarily known for its Rasayana (rejuvenating) Karma, which refers to its ability to revitalize and strengthen the body's systems, delay aging, and promote longevity. Its three most beneficial qualities include Rasa (having Panchras or five tastes), Veerya (Sheeta or cooling potency), and Vipaka (Madhura or sweet post-digestive effect) (Durga et al., 2024).

Amla is a key component in many traditional Ayurvedic formulations, the most notable being Chyawanprash, which is considered a potent Rasayana for enhancing immunity, vigor and youthfulness (Jain *et al.*, 2015). While almost every part of the plant, including roots, leaves, and stems, has some medicinal application, it is the fruit that is predominantly used for its pharmacological properties. The fruit can be consumed alone or in combination with other herbs in various forms such as powder, dried chips, candies, sauces,

pickles, and jellies. Moreover, Amla is highly valued in hair care; it is known to strengthen hair roots, prevent premature graying, and reduce dandruff, thereby promoting healthy and lustrous hair (Kumar *et al.,* 2012). Overall, the widespread use of Amla across therapeutic, culinary and cosmetic domains demonstrates its integral role in Indian traditions, health systems, and daily life practices. Its rich nutrient profile, coupled with its revered status in classical texts, continues to make it an indispensable part of holistic health and wellness.

World Scenario of Amla

India is the leading producer of amla globally, with an annual production of approximately 989,000 metric tonnes cultivated across 91,000 hectares, resulting in an average productivity of 10.86 MT/ha (Reshmi *et al.,* 2018). Apart from India, other major producers include Bangladesh, Japan, and China, where amla is grown both for its nutritional value and medicinal applications (Khurshid *et al.,* 2020).

India Scenario of Amla

In India a total area of 106.97 thousand hectares under Amla cultivation, producing 1378.50 thousand metric tonnes during the period during 2023-24. In India, Madhya Pradesh ranked first with a production of 487.27 thousand metric tonnes, followed by Uttar Pradesh with a production of 425.89 thousand metric tonnes, Tamil Nadu with 208.21 thousand metric tonnes, Gujarat with a production of 69.96 thousand metric tonnes and Chhattisgarh ranked fifth, with 40.38 thousand metric tonnes. These figures highlight the significant contribution of central and southern states in meeting the country's amla production requirements (India stat, 2025).

Chemical Composition of Amla

Amla contains phenol, Vitamin C, Carbs, Iron etc., which was discussed in Table 1.

Table 1: Chemical Composition of Amla

Chemical Constituents	Fresh Amla	Dried Amla
Total phenols (%)	2.40	10.00
Vitamin C (mg/100g)	361.90	222.63
Carbohydrate (%)	1.28	10.40
Iron (mg/100mg)	0.012	0.060
Calcium (%)	0.30	0.20
Fat (%)	0.80	2.20
Phosphorus (%)	0.03	0.14
Total antioxidant capacity (%)	49.50	46.78

Source: Gunavathy and Subarna, 2014.

Post-Harvest Technology & Value-Added Products of Amla

The post-harvest processing of Amla enhances shelf life, reduces wastage and increases profitability for farmers and entrepreneurs. Here's an overview of various amla-based products and their preparation:

1. Amla Preserve

The mature fruit or sliced amla pieces are made soft and soaked in heavy sugar syrup (68° Brix).

Process:

- Prick and soak in 2 per cent salt to remove bitterness.
- Treat with alum, blanch until soft.

Two methods:

- Rapid: Cook in syrup till thick. Faster but may lose flavour.
- Slow: Layer with sugar and gradually raise syrup strength over days. Better quality.

2. Amla Candy

The sweet dried pieces made from preserved amla.

Process:

- Soak in sugar syrup for 7 days, gradually increasing Brix to 70°.
- Dry in shade or cabinet dryer (50–60°C).

Variants:

- Spiced Candy: Add chili, salt, and asafoetida.
- Sweet Candy: Pure sugar-soaked and dried.

3. Amla Jam

- Made with: Amla + guava + sugar + pectin.
- Method: Boil with sugar and pectin till thick; preserved using KMS.

4. Amla Juice

Method:

- Blend fresh amla with water (1:1), filter, and preserve with KMS.
- Used as base for multiple drinks.

5. Amla RTS (Ready-to-Serve) Drink

- Blend: Amla juice + lemon juice + ginger juice + sugar + citric acid + water.
- Purpose: Refreshing, immunity-boosting drink.
- Preservation: Bottle under hygienic conditions.

6. Amla Squash

- Thick syrup concentrate, diluted before use. Similar ingredients as RTS but more concentrated.

7. Amla Sauce

- Blend: Amla pulp with sugar, salt, onion, garlic, spices like cumin and cinnamon.
- Use: Tastes like spicy ketchup; rich in nutrients.

8. Amla Pickle

- Method: Mix boiled amla with salt, turmeric, chilli, fenugreek, and clove in oil.
- Storage: In jars; develops flavour over time.

9. Amla-Based Mouth Fresheners

- Spiced pieces: Amla combined with lime, ginger, salt, pepper in various combinations.
- Curing: 48 hrs soaking, then dried at 60–80°C for 4–5 hrs.
- **Flavors:**
- Amla + Lime + Salt
- Amla + Pepper + Ginger
- Amla + Lime + Ginger + Pepper

10. Other Products

- Amla Sweet Candy – Sugar-rich, child-friendly version.
- Amla-Tomato Sauce – Blended version for a tangy sauce.
- Amla-Papaya Fruit Bar – Nutritious snack for kids and adults.

Additives & Preservatives Used

- Citric Acid: Prevents browning and adjusts acidity.
- KMS (Potassium Metabisulphite): Preserves colour and prevents microbial spoilage.
- Salt, Spices: Flavour enhancement and natural preservation.

Why Value Addition is Important

- Extends shelf life of a highly perishable fruit.
- Increases market demand and income for farmers.
- Helps in utilizing surplus amla during peak seasons.
- Supports small-scale processing industries and women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

Amla holds a unique position in Indian culture, medicine, and agriculture due to its remarkable nutritional and therapeutic properties. With India being the global leader in amla production, the adoption of scientific post-harvest technologies is essential to reduce losses and improve income for farmers and processors. The development of a wide range of value-added products—such as preserve, candy, juice, jam, RTS drinks, pickles and mouth fresheners—demonstrates Amla's versatility and commercial potential. Use of natural preservatives like citric acid and KMS ensures product safety and shelf stability. Promoting these processing methods not only enhances consumer accessibility to Amla in diverse forms but also strengthens rural economies by supporting local industries and empowering women entrepreneurs. Thus, Amla processing contributes significantly to sustainable health, nutrition and economic development.

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