

Crataeva magna (Lour.) DC.

English Names: Garlic Pear Tree, Tree leaved caper

Malayalam Names: Mavulangam, Neermathalam, Neerval

Tamil Name: Maralingam

Description:

Trees, to 10 m high, bark 2-3 mm thick, surface grey, smooth, longitudinally wrinkled. Leaves alternate, digitately trifoliate; rachis 4-12 cm long, slender, grooved above, glabrous; petiolule 4-7 mm long, slender; leaflets 10-20 x 3.5-6 cm, unequal, ovate, ovate-lanceolate or broadly elliptic, base acute, or subacute, apex acute or acuminate, margin entire, glabrous, coriaceous; lateral nerves 9-15 pairs, slender, parallel, prominent, intercostae reticulate, faint. Flowers bisexual, creamy white, in terminal corymbs; pedicel to 5 cm long. Sepals 4, 3 mm long, free, oblong, adnate to the lobed disc. Petals 4, ca. 2 cm long, creamy white, often tinged with purple, long-clawed, obovate. Disc incurved, nectariferous. Stamens many, free, longer than the petals, inserted at the base of gynophore; anthers basifixed, filaments spreading. Gynophore 4-5 cm long at anthesis, slender; ovary superior, ellipsoid, 1 or 2-celled, ovules many; stigma sessile, capitate. Fruit a berry, globose or ovoid, yellowish-grey, rind woody, scurfy, 4-5 x 2.5-3.5 cm; seeds brown, embedded in pulp.

Distribution: Indo-Malesia and China

Parts used: The dried bark and leaves are used for medicinal purposes.

Medicinal uses

The dried bark is used as a raw drug in traditional systems of medicine in India, such as Ayurveda, Siddha etc. A decoction of the bark is internally administered to cure diseases like renal calculi, dysuria, helminthiasis, inflammations and abscesses. The decoction has carminative, laxative, thermogenic, diuretic, lithontriptic, expectorant and demulcent actions. The leaf and stem bark have been evaluated for their antioxidant activity and the inhibition of key enzymes relevant to hyperglycemia. Young fruits are edible. Leaves are bitter and used in treating skin ailments.

