

Dipterocarpus turbinatus (Gurjan tree)

Scientific Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Order: Malvales
Family: Dipterocarpaceae
Genus: Dipterocarpus
C.F.Gaertn.



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Plant profile

Gurjan is a lofty tree, about 35 m tall. Bark is gray or dark brown, shallowly longitudinally fissured and flaky. Branchlets are hairless. Leaf buds are sickle-shaped. Buds and young twigs densely gray velvety. Stipules are 2-6 cm long, densely, shortly dark grayish or dark yellow velvety. Leaf stalks are 2-3 cm, densely gray velvety or hairless. Leaf blade is ovate-oblong, 20-30 cm long, 8-13 cm wide, leathery, smooth or sparsely velvety. Lateral veins are 15-20 pairs conspicuously raised on the underside. Base is rounded or somewhat heart-shaped. Margin is entire or sometimes wavy. Tip is pointed or long-pointed. Flowers are borne in racemes in leaf axils, 3-6-flowered. Sepals are 2 linear, 3 shorter. Stamens are about 30 - anthers linear-lance shaped connective appendages threadlike. Ovary is densely velvety. Style is silvery gray velvety on lower half. Nut is ovoid or narrowly ovoid, densely velvety. Flowering: March-April.

Economic Value

The Gurjan trees belong to the botanical family of Dipterocarpus which has about 70 different species. Out of these species the Dipterocarpus Turbinatus (which is Gurjan), is an important source of commercial timber. Amongst other uses, the trees also yield an Oil (called Gurjan ka Tel) which is also commercially marketed.

A very large number of these Gurjan trees are found on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands near India. Located on the northern tip of the Andaman Island is the Chatham saw mill that is well known for being one of the oldest and biggest saw mills in Asia that gets the good quality local timber available such as the premium Pad auk wood, Gurjan, Satin and Marble wood and works on it, and exports it other parts of the world. So chances are that even if you happen to buy Gurjan plywood in India, it may have had its origins on the beautiful island of Andaman and may have passed through the saw mill over there.
