

Calotropis gigantean

Scientific classification

<i>Kingdom:</i>	<i>Plantae</i>
<i>Order:</i>	<i>Gentianales</i>
<i>Family:</i>	<i>Apocynaceae</i>
<i>Subfamily:</i>	<i>Asclepiadoideae</i>
<i>Genus:</i>	<i>Calotropis</i>
<i>Species:</i>	<i>C. Gigantean</i>



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Plant profile

One of the most common shrubs it reaches tree size if allowed to grow. Trunk and branches yellowish-white, furrowed. Young branches covered with cottony pubescence. Plant is profusely milky.

Leaf: Opposite, sessile, elliptic-oblong, acute, thick, bluish green, with a cottony, pubescent underside. Profusely milky.

Flower: Has no odour, purplish-white, in flat-topped clusters, arises from a stout stalk. Each flower has a central crown. A white flowered variant is found but rather rare. The plant is almost always in flower.

Fruit: In paired boat-shaped capsules, about 8 – 10 cm in length. Dehisces when dry and exposes a large number of brown, flattened seeds with silky hair attached at one end. The arrangement of the seeds in a young fruit is similar to the arrangement of fish scales.

Distribution: Common all over the plains particularly on barren lands. Grows well on black cotton soil. Considered sacred by the Hindus.

Uses: Root bark is used to treat dysentery skin diseases and as an expectorant and emetic. Tincture of leaves used to treat intermittent fever. A powdered flower is used to treat cold and asthma. The bark gives a strong fibre used to make fishing nets and twine and the silky hair of the seeds are used to stuff pillows.