

AMLA

(A MONOGRAPH)



By
Prof. Rani Sadasiva Murty

Amla is an indigenous plant with great medicinal value. It is a valuable ingredient in many medicinal recipes in Ayurveda. According to experts like Susruta it is the best of all acid fruits and most useful for health and in curing many diseases. The instances mentioned in Ayurvedic texts say that the sage Chyavan having used this Amla with some other ingredients could rejuvenate himself. The fruits, bark and leaves are all very much useful in curing diseases. Ayurveda considers this as a wonder herb gifted to man by nature.

LITERATURE ON AMLA

As far as the references to Amla are concerned the following are the literary sources to learn about AMLA in ancient Sanskrit and Ayurvedic literature. The Vedas, Skanda Purana, Garuda Purana, Devi Bhagavata, Agni Purana, Charakam, Susrutam, Ashtanga Hridaya, Madhava Nidanam, Bhava Prakasa, Dhanvantari Nighantu, Amarakosa, Vacaspatyam etc.

MYTHOLOGICAL ACCOUNTS ON AMLA

Before going into its synonyms, status in different types of categorization and medicinal values let there be an attempt to be introduced to its place in puranic literature, its divine origin, divinity and its mystic virtues. There is a good reference to Amla in the Skanda purana, Devi Bhagavata and Garuda Purana.

i) Origin and Divinity of Amla in Skanda Purana

स्कान्दपुराणान्तर्गतश्रीवैष्णवखण्डे
धात्रीमाहात्म्यवर्णनं नाम

कार्तिकमाहात्म्ये

Classification of herbs according to Humors

Vata, Pitta and Sleshma are the three humors in the body which indicate the health condition of the human beings. If balance is maintained among the three that body is in good health. When they are in balance they become virtues (Gunas) and when their imbalance is felt the same Gunas turn into Doshas (sources or indicators of ill health). Due to imbalance among these three humors in variant proportions various problems of ill health develop. This is also a source of categorizing all the herbs. Amla has all the three humors in it. So it balances all the three.

Classification of herbs according to Tastes

Sweet, Sour, Salt, Pungent, Bitter and Astringent are the six tastes to categorize all the orally consumable things. In the Indian medical system the herbs are divided basing on their tastes also. Amla has Pungent, Bitter, Astringent, Sour and Sweet tastes.

Classification of herbs according to number based grouping

In the medical lexicons like Dhanvantari Nighantu there is a method of classification of the herbs based on grouping the herbs into 5 or 3 or 8 or 10 and so on. This is number based grouping of the herbs. Amala is grouped in the three herbal class with Haritaki and Bibhitaki. These three are popularly called TRIPHALA.

Gender based classification of herbs

All the names of herbs in Ayurveda are assigned with any of the three - Masculine, Feminine and Neuter genders. Depending on the gender of the herb's name its identity depends. If a name of a herb is in masculine gender it refers to one herb. The same name if is found in feminine it refers

THE VIRTUES OF THE FLESH IN THE FRUIT

फलमज्जायाः गुणाः

यस्य यस्येह वीर्यं भवति यादृशम्।

तस्य तस्यैव वीर्येण मज्जानमपि निर्दिशेत् ॥४१॥

The virtues of the flesh in the fruit can be decided depending on the virtues of the potency of the fruit. As the potency of the fruit is so are the virtues of the flesh of the fruit.

From Vachaspatyam (p.764)

त्रि० आमल-क्वुन् स्त्रीत्वे गौरा० डीष्। (आमला)(१)
धात्रीवृक्षे।

गौरादिगणे आमलशब्द पाठात् आमलशब्दोऽप्यत्र स्त्रीत्वे
गौरा० डीष् आमली।

As far as its etymology is considered it is a word commonly used in all the three genders referring to the same tree.

अमल+ क्वुन् = आमलकम् (N) /आमलकः (M) /आमलका
(F) (आमलकी) आमलक + डीष् = आमलकी (F)

The word आमलकी is derived from आमलक+ डीष्।

‘त्रिष्वामलकमाख्यातं धात्री तिष्यफलाऽमृता।

रक्तपित्तप्रमेहघ्नं पथ्यं वृष्यं रसायनम्।

The word Amalakam is found in all the three genders. Dhatri, Tishya Phala and Amrta are its three popular synonyms. It is curative of Blood sugar caused by the aggravation of Pitta Dosha. It is favorable, stimulator and tonic for good health. As the stem आमल is found in the group of गौरादि stems this gets डीष् suffix to get its feminine gender form आमलकी (F).

End of Preview.

Rest of the book can be read @

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