

Salvadora persica

Salvadora persica (**Arak**, *Galenia asiatica*, **Meswak**, **Peelu**, **Pilu**, *Salvadora indica*, or **toothbrush tree**, **mustard tree**, **mustard bush**), is a species of *Salvadora*.^{[1][2]} *Salvadora persica* has antiurolithiatic properties.^[3] Used for centuries as a natural toothbrush, its fibrous branches have been promoted by the World Health Organization for oral hygiene use. Research suggests that it contains a number of medically beneficial properties including abrasives, antiseptics, astringent, detergents, enzyme inhibitors, and fluoride.^{[4][5][6][7][8][9]}

1 Distribution

Native to: Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe^[10] Also occurs in Namibia.^[11]

2 Appearance



Leaves & flowers in Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Salvadora persica is a small tree or shrub with a crooked trunk, seldom more than one foot in diameter. Its bark is scabrous and cracked, whitish with pendulous extremities. The root bark of the tree is similar to sand, and the inner surfaces are an even lighter shade of brown. It has a pleasant fragrance, as well as a warm and pungent taste. The leaves break with a fine crisp crackle when trodden

on. In Pakistan these ancient, majestic and sturdy trees are more closely associated with graveyards like the cypress tree in English culture.

^[12]

3 History and use

Salvadora persica is a popular chewing stick throughout the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the wider Muslim world.^[13] Also commonly referred to as miswak, it is often mentioned that the Islamic Prophet Muhammad recommended its use. He is quoted in various Hadith advising the use of the siwak.^[14]

In Namibia the mustard bush is used as a drought-resistant fodder plant for cattle. The Topnaar people that still live on the Kuiseb River use it to feed their goats. The plant's seeds can be used to extract a detergent oil.^[11]

As of 2009, Botanic Gardens Conservation International has a total of eight *Salvadora persica* plants in conservation.^[15]

4 Scientific analysis

According to chemical and phytochemical analysis of *Salvadora persica*, there was an occurrence of carbohydrates and/or trimethylamine; an alkaloid which may effectively be salvadorine; chlorides; sulfur; terpenes; vitamin C; glycosides; large amounts of fluoride and silica; small amounts of tannins, saponins, flavonoids and sterols.^{[16][17]}

5 See also

- Miswak
- Pilu oil

6 Gallery

- in Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh, India.
- in Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh, India.

7 References

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8 External links

- *Salvadora persica* at the *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*
- *Salvadora persica* at the *World Agroforestry Centre*
- *Salvadora persica* in West African plants – A Photo Guide.

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