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SACRED AND MEDICINAL PLANT DIVERSITY OF VANDIOL SACRED GROVE OF SABARKANTHA DISTRICT (N.G.)

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ABSTRACT:

A detailed study was conducted in the Vandiol for sacred groves to evaluate the floristic composition of the grove. Analysis of plant diversity available within the boundary of the sacred grove revealed altogether 33 species.

KEY WORD: *Vandiol, sacred groves, Diversity.*

INTRODUCTION:

Sacred groves are small patches of forests conserved by man's spiritual belief and faith. In India, 13,720 sacred groves have been enumerated from 19 states. Kerala, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have the maximum number of sacred groves. They are rich in rare and endemic species of plants and represent a traditional conservation, management and development of natural resources.

In Gujarat state there are many sacred groves, but mostly in Sabarkantha District of Gujarat state, there are dense forest area and old tribal caste.

STUDY AREA:

Small village of Bhiloda Taluka, near Shamlaji. Located between 23° 38' 27.14" North latitudes and 73° 19' 57.98" East longitudes. Vandiol covered with beautiful rich forest. There is old temple in this forest known as *Shree Vajinath mahadeo Mandir*, And priest of this temple conserve this forest and make Ayurvedic medicine of plants collected from this forest. (Plate-6- A,B & C)

There is a society of tree planting in this village, they also conserve forest and every members of this society are Ladies. This is a first society of ladies for conserve the forest in India.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

For this study, we visited Vandiol Sacred Grove regularly and planned:

- 1) Visit this sacred grove and local people and Pujari.
- 2) Identify plants using The Flora of Gujarat State and The Flora of Bombay Presidency.
- 3) Most of the plant preserved by taking pictures.
- 4) Sacred and medicinal value of each plant is enumerated like:
 - a) Binomial, Family
 - b) Vernacular Name
 - c) Sacred Uses and
 - d) Medicinal Uses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The species come under 31 genera and 22 families. Sacred groves (SGs) are forest patches conserved by the local people intertwined with their socio-cultural and religious practices. SGs are one of the most important and essential bio-resources of the country. It represents an ancient Indian conservation tradition, protected by the local people out of reverence and respect, fear and sentiment for nature and incarnation of nature.

DESCRIPTION OF RECORDED SACRED PLANTS IN STUDY AREA:

1. *Adhatoda vasica* Nees.(ACANTHACEAE)(Plate-1-1)

Vernacular Name: ARDUSI

Sacred Uses: The Stem of this plant is used as sacred.

Medicinal Uses: Leaves of this plant are useful in cough, asthma, fever and chronic bronchitis.

2. *Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corr. (RUTACEAE) (Plate-1-2)

Vernacular Name: BILI

Sacred Uses: This tree is sacred to God *Shiva*, worship cannot be completed without the leaves of *BILI*.

Medicinal Uses: Fruits of this plant used in dysentery, dyspepsia. Leaf used in bronchial asthma and cholera.

3. *Annona squamosa* L. (ANNONACEAE) (Plate-1-3)

Vernacular Name: SITAPHAL

Sacred Uses: Fruits offered to God and Goddess.

Medicinal Uses: Leaf paste applied on ulcers and wounds.

4. *Anthocephalus cadamba* (Roxb.)Miq. (RUBIACEAE) (Plate-1-4)

Vernacular Name: KADAMB

Sacred Uses: This plant was favourite to the God *Krishna*, he was standing under this tree to play his flute.

Medicinal Uses: Leaf used in stomach pain, burning skin, wounds and cure pimples.

5. *Azadirachta indica* A. Juss. (MELIACEAE) (Plate-1-5)

Vernacular Name: LIMDO

Sacred Uses: The Hindu community used every part of this tree as sacred in religious ceremonies. *Shitala*, the Goddess of small pox is said to inhabit it.

Medicinal Uses: Leaf paste and bark paste used on wound, snake-bite and scorpion-sting. Neem oil use as antifungal, antiseptic, antimicrobial and antifertility.

6. *Bambusa arundinacea* (Retz.)Willd. (POACEAE) (Plate-1-6)

Vernacular Name: VANS

Sacred Uses: Flower offered to God and Goddess.

7. *Bauhinia variegata* L. (CAESALPINIACEAE) (Plate-2-7)

Vernacular Name: KACHNAR

Sacred Uses: It is seen on Buddhist sculptures. The flowers are offered to the God and Goddess.

Medicinal Uses: Extract of leaves used in tumour in abdomen. Tribal tie leaves on abdomen.

8. *Bombax ceiba* L. (BOMBACACEAE) (Plate-2-8)

Vernacular Name: SHIMLO.

Sacred Uses: The flowers are offered to the God and Goddess.

Medicinal Uses: The powder of dry flowers with honey is given to the tribal ladies suffering from excessive bleeding during menstruation. Tribal take orally gum-powder with water to cure acute diarrhoea and dysentery. Tribal also take orally the extract of root-bark to cure guinea-worm. It is also considered as a good nerve tonic and aphrodisiac like the extract of stem-bark.

9. *Boswellia serrata* Roxb. Ex Coleb. (BURSERACEAE) (Plate-2-9)

Vernacular Name: SALAI, GUGAL

Sacred Uses: Its fragrant resin is largely consumed as incense in houses, especially during the religious ceremonies. The gum-resin is offered to the God and Goddess and burnt near the sick persons. It is believed that fumes keep bad influence away, thus hastening recovery.

10. *Butea monosperma* (Lamk.) Taub. (FABACEAE) (Plate-2-10)

Vernacular Name: KHAKHARO

Sacred Uses: Its flowers are offered to Gods. Its dried twigs under the designation of *Samhitas*, are used for the feeding of *homa*, or sacred fire.

Medicinal Uses: The gum is eaten as a tonic against weakness and medicinally to cure dysentery, diarrhoea and roundworms often with the gum of *Mangifera indica* (Ambo) and *Moringa oleifera*. The extract of flowers is taken with sugar as a cooling agent.

11. *Calotropis procera* (Ait.) Ait.f. (ASCLEPIADACEAE) (Plate-2-11)

Vernacular Name: AKADO

Sacred Uses: The flowers of these plants are used in the worship of *Mahadeo* and *Hanuman*. Besides, its twigs are also employed as *Samhitas*, for the feeding of sacred fires (the *Havan*). **Medicinal Uses:** Tribal apply the paste of roots on the pimples and boils. The tribal apply the milky latex against thorn pricking, snake-bite, piles and to relieve the pain of joints. Tribal apply the root-paste against scorpion-sting.

12. *Catharanthus roseus* (L.) G. Don. (APOCYNACEAE) (Plate-2-12)

Vernacular Name: BARMASI

Sacred Uses: Its flowers as sacred are offered to Deities and Gods.

Medicinal Uses: Leaf used in diabetes.

13. *Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Pers. (POACEAE) (Plate-3-13)

Vernacular Name: DARBH

Sacred Uses: This is used in many religious ceremonies, especially in *Satyanarayana puja* and the *Hawan*. The grass is widely used by Hindu community in various customs and ceremonies from birth to death.

Medicinal Uses: The *Bhils* apply the paste of grass on cuts and wounds to check bleeding. The decoction of grass is taken orally as diuretic and for the treatment of dropsy and blood pressure.

14. *Datura metal* L. (SOLANACEAE) (Plate-3-14)

Vernacular Name: DHATURO

Sacred Uses: The flower are considered sacred to God *Shiva*, hence are offered to them.

15. *Emblica officinalis* Gaertn. (EUPHOBIAEAE) (Plate-3-15)

Vernacular Name: AMLA

Sacred Uses: In *Vrat Kaumaudi*, the fast and worshiping of this tree is also ordered. This tree is identified with *Valmiki* and worshipped by *Bhil* on 11th day of waxing moon (*Amri Ekadeshi*) to absolve themselves from the crime.

Medicinal Uses: Amla is an accepted hair tonic in traditional recipes for enriching hair growth and hair pigmentation. Amla is one of the essential ingredients of “*TRIPHLA*” *choorna* (Powder). It is used for the

treatment of diseases like blood disorders, heart problems, piles, impotence, menstrual disturbance, cough, asthma, and abdominal disorders.

16. *Ficus benghalensis* L. (MORACEAE) (Plate-3-16)

Vernacular Name: VAD

Sacred Uses: This plant is considered a sacred tree and it is supposed that Brahma was transformed into this tree. Its dried twigs are also used as a *Samhitas* for producing sacred fire. Hindu ladies worship the tree for being blessed with son, prosperity and long life of their husband, especially in May-June at the occasion of local festival called “Bar – *Amavasiya* or *Vat – Savitri Pujan*”.

Medicinal Uses: The Tribals apply the latex against bleeding, boils and earache. Tribal give orally an extract of very young leaves to cure diarrhoea in children and the extract of young aerial roots as a health tonic.

17. *Ficus racemosa* L. (MORACEAE) (Plate-3-17)

Vernacular Name: UMRO

Sacred Uses: The plant is considered as a sacred tree. The fruits are offered to the God and Goddess.

Medicinal Uses: Tender twigs are used as tooth-brush by *Bhils* when mouth is bitter due to fever. The latex is also used as a mouth wash.

18. *Ficus religiosa* L. (MORACEAE) (Plate-3-18)

Vernacular Name: PIPALO

Sacred Uses: The *Pipal* tree is believed to be inhabited by the sacred tried, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.

Medicinal Uses: The tribal rub the bark on the stone and apply the sap against honey bee-sting.

19. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L. (MALVACEAE) (Plate-4-19)

Vernacular Name: JASUD

Sacred Uses: Its flowers are favourite of Goddess Kali, the divine mother. So the devotees of *Durga* offer the flowers in their worship.

Medicinal Uses: The Tribal take orally the juice of leaves to cure abdominal pain.

20. *Madhuca indica* J.F. Gmelin. (SAPOTACEAE) (Plate-4-20)

Vernacular Name: MAHUDO

Sacred Uses: *Mahuwa* tree is believed to be the home of evil spirits; therefore, the pregnant ladies are not allowed to go near the tree by the tribal.

Medicinal Uses: The liquor distilled from flowers is dropped on cuts and cut placenta of child after delivery to check infection.

21. *Mangifera indica* L. (ANACARDIACEAE) (Plate-4-21)

Vernacular Name: AMBO

Sacred Uses: Its twigs are offered to sacred fire as Samhidas. Its leaves are also employed in adorning 'Mandaps' of various ceremonies.

Medicinal Uses: The tribal apply the gum-resin against scorpion-sting. The seed-powder is taken orally with water to cure diarrhoea by most of the tribes.

22. *Nerium indicum* Mill. (APOCYNACEAE) (Plate-4-22)

Vernacular Name: LAL KAREN

Sacred Uses: Its flowers are collected and are offered as sacred offerings to *Shiva* by the Hindus.

Medicinal Uses: Decoction of leaves is used as anti-inflammatory agent and also applied on syphilitic ulcers. Leaves and flowers are also used to treat malaria.

23. *Ocimum sanctum* L. (LAMIACEAE) (Plate-4-23)

Vernacular Name: TULSI

Sacred Uses: The plant is considered most sacred plant that's why it is grown in every Hindu house. Brahmins hold it sacred to the God *Krishna* and *Vishnu*.

Medicinal Uses: The juice of the leaves, flower tops and tender roots is used as an antidote in snake poisoning. The root decoction is given in malarial fever as a diaphoretic. The leaves are known as stimulant, diaphoretic, antiperiodic and expectorant and are used again in catarrh and bronchitis.

24. *Plumeria rubra* Ait. (APOCYNACEAE) (Plate-4-24)

Vernacular Name: CHAMPO, KHAD-CHAMPO

Sacred Uses: Its flowers as sacred are offered to the Gods.

Medicinal Uses: Paste of leaves is applied as a poultice to indolent swellings. Its roots are known as powerful cathartic and root bark as purgative and anti-herpetic and both are used in Gonorrhoea and venereal sores.

25. *Polyalthia longifolia* Thw. (ANNONACEAE) (Plate-5-25)

Vernacular Name: ASHOPALAV

Sacred Uses: The plant is considered sacred and is sometimes met near the temples. Its leaves are strung into wreaths and hung to adorn doors, on Hindu festive occasions in Maharashtra and Gujarat also. Leaves are employed in marriage ceremonies for covering *mandap*.

Medicinal Uses: The decoction of bark is used as a febrifuge. Stem bark is powdered and mixed with butter to apply on genitalial region and given orally to cure gonorrhoea.

26. *Prosopis cineraria* (L.) Druce. (FABACEAE) (Plate-5-26)

Vernacular Name: KHIJADO

Sacred Uses: Its dried twigs are used as *Samidhas* in feeding the sacred fire, and the leaves are offered in the prayer of *Ganpati*.

Medicinal Uses: Its bark is used efficaciously in rheumatism and roots as anti-dysenteric. A powder of its flowers mixed with sugar, is given to pregnant women as a safeguard against miscarriage.

27. *Syzygium cumini* (L.) Skeels. (MYRTACEAE) (Plate-5-27)

Vernacular Name: JAMBU

Sacred Uses: The Hindus consider the plant sacred. The fruits are offered to the God and Goddess.

Medicinal Uses: The stem-bark is used on the head to relieve headache. Tribal take stem-bark powder with water orally to cure dysentery and leaf juice to cure abdominal pain.

28. *Tabernaemontana divaricata* (L.) R.Br. (APOCYNACEAE) (Plate-5-28)

Vernacular Name: TAGAR, CHANDNI

Sacred Uses: The wood of the plant is used as incense in religious ceremonies and the flowers are offered to the Gods.

Medicinal Uses: The milky juice of the leaves useful on wounds to prevent inflammation and the diseases of eyes.

29. *Tamarindus indica* L. (FABACEAE) (Plate-5-29)

Vernacular Name: KHATI AMLI

Sacred Uses: Local people believe that, this tree is residence of evils. The tribal ladies worship the tree in the month of *Sawan* for prosperity and bright future.

Medicinal Uses: Tribal applies the seed-paste as an antidote to scorpion-sting and snake-bite. Leaf-paste is used in inflammatory swellings to relieve pain.

30. *Tectona grandis* L.f. (VERBENACEAE) (Plate-5-30)

Vernacular Name: SAAG, HAAG

Sacred Uses: In the land left aside deity and *devra*, this tree is planted by the tribal.

Medicinal Uses: The extract of stem-bark is given orally by the *Bhils* to cure diarrhoea.

31. *Thespepsia populnea* (L.) Sol. ex Corr. (MALVACEAE) (Plate-6-31)

Vernacular Name: PARAS PIPLO

Sacred Uses: Hindus employ its leaves in the religious ceremonies attending death.

Medicinal Uses: The paste of roots is prescribed to be rubbed on penis to cure impotency.

32. *Tinospora cordifolia* (Willd.) Miers ex Hook.f. (MENISPERMACEAE) (Plate-6-32)

Vernacular Name: GALO

Sacred Uses: Plant is often bruised and put into water; the liquid thus formed being drunk by the Brahmins at some of their religious ceremonies. Besides, a necklace of small pieces of the stem known as '*Kamlani-mala*' is also wore in some parts of India as a cure for Jaundice.

Medicinal Uses: The decoction of stem and leaves is given orally in periodic fever and diarrhoea by the Tribal. The decoction of fresh leaves is considered very effective against leucorrhoea by Tribal when taken orally. The root and stem are effective used as antidotes to snakebite.

33. *Vitex negundo* L. (VERBENACEAE) (Plate-6-33)

Vernacular Name: NAGOD

Sacred Uses: The fruit with the help of thread is tied on the opposite side ear to cure migraine.

Medicinal Uses: Tribal crush the leaves and smear near the nostrils to cure headache. Leaves of this plant is useful to cure *Chikan Guniya*.

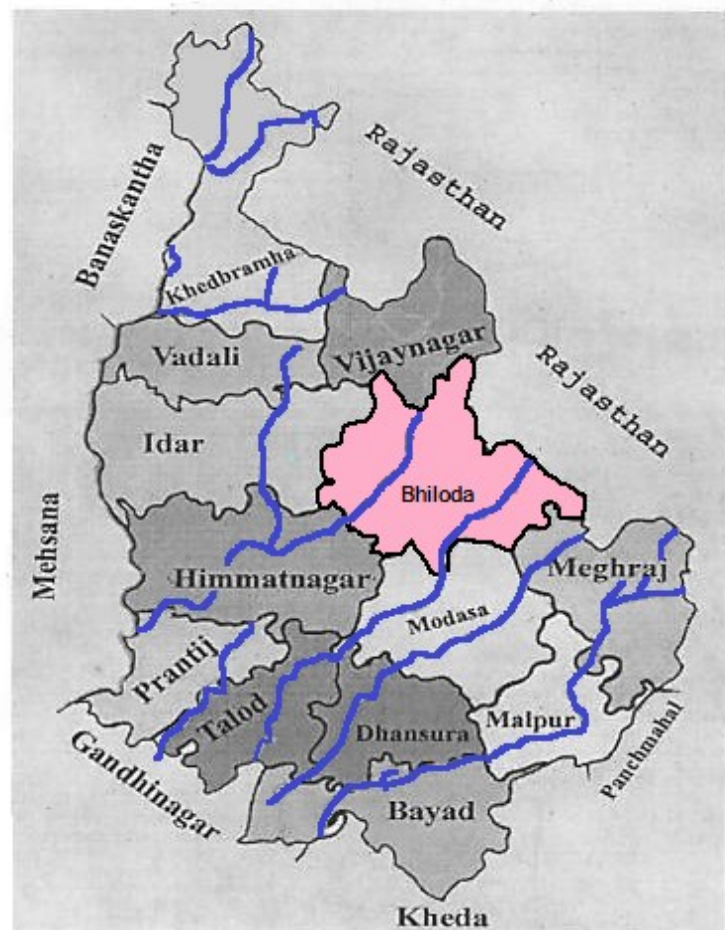
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Table:1 List of Sacred plants of Vandiol Sacred Grove

Sr. No.	Sci. Name	Local Name	Family
1.	<i>Adhatoda vasica</i> Nees.	ARDUSI	ACANTHACEAE
2.	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (L.) Corr.	BILI	RUTACEAE
3.	<i>Annona squamosa</i> L.	SITAPHAL	ANNONACEAE
4.	<i>Anthocephalus cadamba</i> (Roxb.) Miq.	KADAMB	RUBIACEAE
5.	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A. Juss.	LIMDO	MELIACEAE
6.	<i>Bambusa arundinacea</i> (Retz.) Willd.	VANS	POACEAE
7.	<i>Bauhinia variegata</i> L.	KACHNAR	CAESALPINIACEAE
8.	<i>Bombax ceiba</i> L.	SHIMLO	BOMBACACEAE
9.	<i>Boswellia serrata</i> Roxb. Ex Coleb.	SALAI, GUGAL	BURSERACEAE
10.	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lamk.) Taub.	KHAKHARO	FABACEAE
11.	<i>Calotropis procera</i> (Ait.) Ait.f.	AKADO	ASCLEPIADACEAE
12.	<i>Catharanthus roseus</i> (L.) G. Don.	BARMASI	APOCYNACEAE
13.	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.) Pers	DARBH	POACEAE
14.	<i>Datura metel</i> L.	DHATURO	SOLANACEAE
15.	<i>Emblia officinalis</i> Gaertn.	AMLA	EUPHOBACEAE
16.	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i> L.	VAD	MORACEAE
17.	<i>Ficus racemosa</i> L.	UMRO	MORACEAE
18.	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> L.	PIPALO	MORACEAE
19.	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> L.	JASUD	MALVACEAE
20.	<i>Madhuca indica</i> J.F. Gmelin.	MAHUDO	SAPOTACEAE
21.	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L.	AMBO	ANACARDIACEAE
22.	<i>Nerium indicum</i> Mill.	LAL KAREN	APOCYNACEAE
23.	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> L.	TULSI	LAMIACEAE
24.	<i>Plumeria rubra</i> Ait.	CHAMPO, KHAD-CHAMPO	APOCYNACEAE
25.	<i>Polyalthia longifolia</i> Thw.	ASHOPALAV	ANNONACEAE
26.	<i>Prosopis cineraria</i> (L.) Druce.	KHIJADO	FABACEAE
27.	<i>Syzygium cumini</i> (L.) Skeels.	JAMBU	MYRTACEAE
28.	<i>Tabernaemontana divaricata</i> (Linn.) R.Br.	TAGAR, CHANDNI	APOCYNACEAE
29.	<i>Tamarindus indica</i> L.	KHATI AMLI	FABACEAE
30.	<i>Tectona grandis</i> L.f.	SAAG, HAAG	VERBENACEAE
31.	<i>Thespepsia populnea</i> (Linn.) Sol. ex Corr.	PARAS PIPLO	MALVACEAE
32.	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> (Willd.) Miers ex Hook.f.	GALO	MENISPERMACEAE
33.	<i>Vitex negundo</i> L.	NAGOD	VERBENACEAE

Map of Sabarkantha district

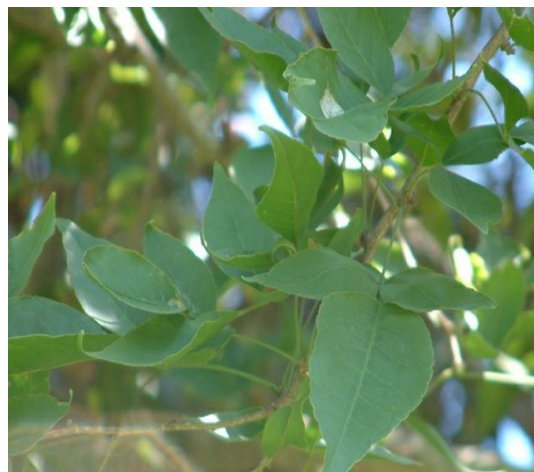


Map of Gujarat

PLATE: 1



(1) *Adhatoda vasica* Nees.



(2) *Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corr.



(3) *Annona squamosa* Linn.



(4) *Anthocephalus cadamba* (Roxb.) Miq.



(5) *Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.



(6) *Bambusa arundinacea* Roxb. Willd.

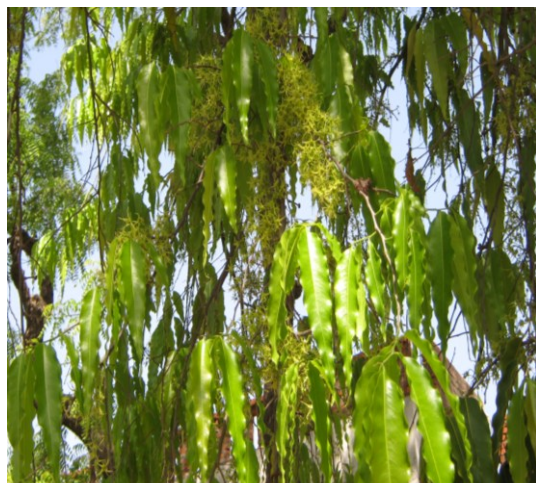
PLATE: 2

(7) *Bauhinia variegata* Linn.(8) *Bombax ceiba* Linn.(9) *Boswellia serrata* Roxb. Ex Coleb.(10) *Butea monosperma* (Lamk.) Taub.(11) *Calotropis procera* (Ait.) Ait.f.(12) *Catharanthus roseus* (Linn.) G. Don.

PLATE: 3**(13) *Cynodon dactylon* (Linn.) Pers.****(14) *Datura metal* Linn.****(15) *Emblica officinalis* Gaertn.****(16) *Ficus benghalensis* Linn.****(17) *Ficus racemosa* Linn.****(18) *Ficus religiosa* Linn.**

PLATE: 4**(19) *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* Linn.****(20) *Madhuca indica* J.F. Gmelin****(21) *Mangifera indica* Linn.****(22) *Nerium indicum* Mill.****(23) *Ocimum sanctum* Linn.****(24) *Plumeria rubra* Ait.**

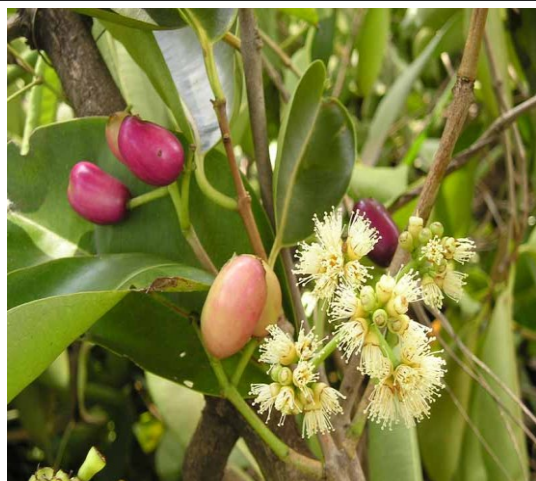
PLATE: 5



(25) *Polyalthia longifolia* Thw.



(26) *Prosopis cineraria* (Linn.) Druce.



(27) *Syzygium cumini* (Linn.) Skeels .



(28) *Tabernaemontana divaricata* (Linn.) R.Br.



(29) *Tamarindus indica* Linn.



(30) *Tectona grandis* L.f.

PLATE: 6



(31) *Thespepsia populnea* (Linn.) Sol. ex Corr. (32) *Tinospora cordifolia* (Willd.) Miers ex Hook.f.



(33) *Vitex negundo* Linn.

(A) Shree Vaijnath Mahadeo Temple- Vandiol



(B, C) Sacred *Pipal* Tree (*Ficus religiosa*)