

## **Your star, your tree**

Most people are convinced about the need to have a tree in their neighbourhood, but few would imagine that there are actually trees that match their own personalities. There is no well-researched account to prove this. It's difficult to believe this in the beginning. However, the evidences show that the 'tree to people' comparison is quite dependable. Ancestors have chosen these trees because the character of the trees and the individual go together. The characteristics that are ascribed to the trees can be found in the individual. Whether we accept it or not it will help promote the concept of green belt. Over and above these 27 star trees represent a list of traditional species with medicinal properties that have been disappearing over the decades. Of the plant types used in indigenous systems of medicine, 24% are trees and any attempt to plant and nurture them will be a real asset.

This rather mystical theory of trees being closely linked with sun signs and traits of people is getting popular among many. The Forest Department in Gujarat is on record asserting that such a strong affinity for trees based on star signs has actually helped turn parts of that State green. Star trees are quite different from lucky birthstones. If you choose to plant a tree that matches your star, you help the entire neighbourhood. Both person and tree create a better world as their fortunes grow. Even people who have no belief in astrology can work for the environment by planting exclusive tree species.

Planting trees of your birth star keeps one healthy and happy. Though this may seem skeptical many assumptions and indications hold good. Krishnamurthy, a civil contractor-turned horticulturist from Chennai argues "There are 12 rasis, 9 grahams, 8 directions. There are lakhs of shrubs and plants in India. But our ancestors have referred to only 27 trees that relate to the 27 stars. There are vibrations from these trees that suit the constitution of the body and bring positive changes".

And some examples to prove this. The tree that should be planted by persons who have Pooram as their birth star is 'plasu'. It's called the Flame of the Forest. These people have the capacity to guide others. Wherever they go, they will shine as leaders. They will prove their individual identity.

Are you very independent and love to work alone? You are not the kind of person who is likely to wither away because of bad times. Doesn't it sound like the characteristics of the famous karimpana? Uthirattathi persons are like that.

Here is another match: You are the type of person that goes out of the way to help people. Friends and relatives can count on you in a crisis. Such a strong trait of `Avittam' can only make vanni, a species that is extolled in literature, your own special tree.

Someone whose star is `Maham' should find particular satisfaction by planting the banyan tree. The similarity in traits is that nothing can grow under this towering personality. The star `Pooradam' is linked with the vanchi plant. The comparison here is to a gentle disposition and immense charisma. It is really a win-win situation because each such tree or plant has medicinal properties and can only do good.

There are many more similarities!!!

Planting trees provide a green belt, mitigate global warming, protect our plant wealth and support our herbal medicine sector. When planting of trees is connected with astrology and health-related issues, it adds to the enthusiasm of people and increases their awareness.

What are the occasions for planting these trees? When we have family functions like marriage, birthday and wedding celebrations, we can commemorate these events by planting trees associated with the stars of family members. This will give us the satisfaction. Since we are planting a sapling to please our birth star, only good things are going to happen in our lives. It will also give us the satisfaction that we are doing something good to the public. Nowadays, because of want of space, we cut trees while constructing new buildings. We don't feel any qualms while cutting the trees. But you will become possessive of them when you plant them for astrological purposes.

Although there is a desire to plant a tree and be a part of the green environment, people living in a city and amidst mushrooming apartments finds difficult to find the space for a tree. They can plant them in temples, schools, and other public places. Also, if industries and factories take up this issue, the result will be miraculous.

Don't you want to contribute your part in creating a better earth for our progeny to live in? Spot out your star tree and check your diary for the next function at home now!

Star signs and green cover. Here's how astrology can help sustain environment

No.	STAR	TREES	
		Scientific name	Malayalam name
1	Ashwathi	<i>Strychnos nux-vomica</i>	Kaanjiram
2	Bharani	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	Nelli
3	Karthika	<i>Ficus racemosa</i>	Athi
4	Rohini	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	Njaval
5	Makayiram	<i>Acacia catechu</i>	Karingali
6	Thiruvathira	<i>Diospyros ebenum</i>	Karimaram
7	Punartham	<i>Bambusa arundinacea</i>	Mulha
8	Pooyam	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	Arayal
9	Aayilyam	<i>Mesua nagassarium</i>	Naakam
10	Makam	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i>	Peral
11	Pooram	<i>Butea monosperma</i>	Plaasu
12	Uthram	<i>Ficus microcarpa</i>	Ithi
13	Atham	<i>Spondias pinnata</i>	Ambazham
14	Chithira	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	Koovalam
15	Chothi	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>	Neermaruthu
16	Vishakam	<i>Flacourtia jangomas</i>	Vayyankatha
17	Anizham	<i>Mimusops elengi</i>	Ilanji
18	Ketta	<i>Aporosa lindleyana</i>	Vetti
19	Moolam	<i>Vateria indica</i>	Vellapine
20	Pooraadam	<i>Salix tetrasperma</i>	Vanchi
21	Uthraadam	<i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i>	Plaavu
22	Thiruvonam	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i>	Erukku
23	Avittam	<i>Prosopis cineraria</i>	Vannhi
24	Chathayam	<i>Anthocephalus chinensis</i>	Kadampu
25	Pooriruttaathi	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Thenmaavu
26	Uthrattaathi	<i>Borassus flabellifer</i>	Karimpana
27	Revathi	<i>Madhuca longifolia</i>	Iluppa

***Strychnos nux-vomica*** Family: Loganiaceae

English: Strychnine tree; Malayalam: Kanjiram; Hindi: Kajra, Kuchila

Large deciduous tree, with simple leaves and white fragrant flowers. The tree survives in lateritic soil; prefers a warm tropical climate. The plant is distributed throughout India in deciduous forests up to 1200m. It is also found in Sri Lanka, Siam, Indochina and Malaysia. *Strychnos* is highly toxic to man and animals producing stiffness of muscles and convulsions, ultimately leading to death. In small doses it can serve as efficacious cure forms of paralysis and other nervous disorders. The seeds are used as a remedy in intermittent fever, indigestion,

chronic dysentery, paralytic and neuralgic affections. It is also useful in impotence, neuralgia of face, heart disease. Leaves are applied as poultice in the treatment of chronic wounds.

***Phyllanthus emblica***      Family: Euphorbiaceae

English: Indian gooseberry; Malayalam: Nelli; Hindi: Amla

Small to medium sized deciduous tree growing up to 18 m in height; hardy and it prefers a warm dry climate; found through out tropical and subtropical India, Sri Lanka and Malaca. Two forms of Amla are generally distinguished, the wild ones with smaller fruits and the cultivated ones with larger fruits. The fruit is used in many ayurvedic preparations from time immemorial. It is useful in haemorrhage, diarrhoea and dysentery. In combination with iron, it is useful for anaemia, jaundice and indigestion. The green fruits are made into pickles and preserves to stimulate appetite. Seed is used in asthma, bronchitis and biliousness. Leaves are also useful in conjunctivitis, inflammation and dysentery. The bark is useful in gonorrhoea, jaundice and diarrhoea. The dried fruits have good effect on hair hygiene and used as ingredient in shampoo and hair oil. The fruit is a very rich source of Vitamin C and is used as a nutritive tonic in general weakness.

***Ficus racemosa***      Family: Moraceae

English: Cluster fig, Country fig; Malayalam: Athi; Hindi: Gular

Moderate to large-sized spreading laticiferous, deciduous tree without many prominent aerial roots; it is distributed all over India. Roots are useful in treating dysentery. The bark is useful as a wash for wounds, highly efficacious in threatened abortions and recommended in uropathy. The ripe fruits are sweet, cooling and are used in haemoptysis, thirst and vomiting.

***Syzygium cumini***      Family: Myrtaceae

English: Jaman, Jambolan; Malayalam: Njaval; Hindi: Jamun

A large or medium sized, ever green tree usually seen along river banks. The bark is useful in diabetes, intrinsic haemorrhage, gastric disorders, fever, skin diseases and wounds. Leaves are antibacterial and is used for vomiting. The ash of leaves is used for strengthening the teeth and gums. The fruits and seed are sweet, acrid, sour, liver tonic and cooling. They are used in diabetes, diarrhea, pharyngitis, splenopathy, urinary disorders, ring worm and to strengthen gums and teeth.

***Acacia catechu***      Family: Mimosaceae

Malayalam: Karingali; Hindi: Khair, Khaira

Moderate sized deciduous tree, 9-12 m in height with dark greyish or brown rough bark and hooked short spines. Commonly used as a blood purifier and for leprosy and leucoderma. Tree bark is useful in depression, conjunctivitis and spitting of blood. It is anthelmintic and anti-

inflammatory. The wood is hypoglycaemic, anti-inflammatory and hypotensive. It is useful in cough, itching, leprosy, skin diseases, worm infestation, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, dysentery, foul ulcers and wounds, anaemia, diabetes etc.

***Diospyros ebenum*** Family: Ebenaceae

English: Black sapotae; Malayalam: Karimaram; Hindi: Abnus

Large tree with glabrous branchlets seen in dry evergreen forest of Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and adjacent areas. Unripe fruit, leaf, fruit, bark are used as laxative, aphrodisiac; also in nasal bleeding, flatulence, anaemia, burns and scabies

***Bambusa arundinacea*** Family: Bambusaceae

English: Thorny bamboo; Malayalam: Mula, illi; Hindi: Bams, Kantabams

A tall thorny bamboo upto 30 m in height with many stems, nodes prominent, internodes up to 45 cm long; found throughout India in areas up to 2,100 m elevation. The roots are useful in leprosy, skin diseases, burning sensation, discolorations, ringworm and general debility. The leaves are useful in ophthalmopathy, haemorrhoids, diarrhea, gonorrhoea, wounds, skin diseases and fever.

***Ficus religiosa*** Family: Moraceae

English: Peepal tree, Sacred fig; Malayalam: Arayal; Hindi: Pippal

A large deciduous tree, frequently epiphytal with aerial roots. It is common throughout India, often planted in the vicinity of the temples. Bark is used in the treatment of gonorrhoea, diarrhoea, dysentery, haemorrhoids and gastrohelcosis. It is also good for burns. Leaves and tender shoots have purgative properties and are also recommended for wounds and skin diseases. The latex is good for neuralgia, inflammations and haemorrhages. Fruits are laxative and digestive.

***Mesua nagassarium*** Family: Clusiaceae

English: Ironwood tree; Malayalam: Nagappuvu, Nanku, Vayanavu, Churuli, Eliponku

Medium sized to large evergreen tree, 18-30 m in height with reddish brown bark which peels off in thin flakes. Fruits are ovoid with a conical point surrounded by the enlarged sepals. The plant occurs in sub-tropical to tropical areas of East India, Andaman Islands and Western Ghats upto an altitude of 1500m. It prefers plains, riverbanks or places which do not experience moisture stress for its luxuriant growth. Bark and roots are useful in gastritis and bronchitis. Fixed oil expressed from seeds is used for cutaneous affections, sores, scabies, wounds and in rheumatism. Dried flowers are useful in bleeding piles, dysentery, thirst, irritability of the stomach, excessive perspiration, cough, indigestion etc. Leaves and flowers are used in scorpion stings.

***Ficus benghalensis*** Family: Moraceae

English: Banyan; Malayalam: Peral, Vatavriksham; Hindi: Bat

Laticiferous tree up to 30 m in height with widely spreading branches bearing many aerial roots functioning as prop roots; found in the Sub-Himalayan tract and Peninsular India. It is widely used in treatment of skin diseases. Stem bark, root bark, aerial roots, leaves, vegetative buds and milky exudates are used in medicine. It improves complexion, cures, burning sensation and vaginal disorders, while an infusion of the bark cures dysentery, diarrhoea, uterine problems, nervous disorders and reduces blood sugar in diabetes. Young twigs when used as a tooth brush strengthen gum and teeth.

***Butea monosperma*** Family: Fabaceae

English: Flame of the forest, Bastard teak; Malayalam: Plasu, Chamata; Hindi: Dhak, Palas

A medium sized deciduous tree, with bright orange red flowers; found throughout India in deciduous forest in areas upto 1200 m elevation. The bark is useful in diarrhoea, dysentery, haemorrhoids, intestinal worms, bone fractures, rectal diseases, ulcers, tumours and diabetes. The leaves are useful in pimples, boils, flatulence, worm infestations, inflammations and haemorrhoids. The flowers are useful in fever, leprosy, skin diseases, swellings, arthritis, burning sensation, bone fractures and are very efficacious in birth control. The seeds are useful in herpes, skin diseases, ringworm, arthritis, flatulence, constipation and diabetes. The gum known as Bengalkino or Buteakino is useful in diarrhea, haemorrhoids, diabetes, leprosy, skin diseases, ulcer, general debility, hyper acidity, dyspepsia and fever. The ash of the tender branches is useful in abdominal disorders such as flatulence etc.

***Ficus microcarpa*** Family: Moraceae

Malayalam: Ithi; Hindi: Kamarup

Ficus species with few branches and many adventitious roots growing downward. It is widely distributed throughout India and in Sri Lanka, S. China, Ryuku Isles and Britain. *Plakasah* is one of the five ingredients of the group *panchvalkala i.e*, five barks. It is acclaimed as cooling, astringent and curative of *raktapitta doshas*, ulcers, skin diseases, burning sensation, inflammation etc. The bark and leaves are used in diarrhoea, dysentery, diabetes, burning sensation, haemaorrhages etc.

***Spondias pinnata*** Family: Anacardiaceae

English: Wild mango, Hogplum; Malayalam: Ampazham, Mampuli; Hindi: Amra

Medium sized, aromatic, deciduous tree, up to 27 m in height; found throughout India, wild as well as cultivated. The roots are useful in regulating menstruation; the bark is aromatic, astringent and cooling and is administered in dysentery, diarrhoea, vomiting and muscular

rheumatism. The leaves are aromatic, acidic and astringent. The unripe fruits are astringent, sour, appetiser and aphrodisiac. The ripe fruits are sweet, astringent, cooling, tonic and constipating. They are useful in indigestion, diarrhea and general debility.

***Aegle marmelos*** Family: Rutaceae

English: Bengal quince; Malayalam: Koovalam; Hindi: Bael

Medium sized armed deciduous tree growing upto 8m in height with straight sharp axillary thorns; bael fruit resembles a golden apple. This tree is popular in 'Shiva' and 'Vishnu' temples. Its leaves are trifoliolate symbolizing the 'Thrimurthies'-Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, with spear shaped leaflets resembling "Thrisoolam" the weapon of Lord Shiva. It is grown all over the country, especially in the premises of temples and houses. North Indian varieties are preferred to South Indian types for large scale cultivation. Every part of the tree is medicinal and useful. The roots are used in many ayurvedic medicines for curing diabetes and leprosy. It is an ingredient of the 'dasamoola'. The Bark is used to cure intestinal disorders. Leaves are hypoglycaemic. 'Two leaves before breakfast' is said to keep diabetes under control. Leaves and fruits are useful in controlling diarrhoea and dysentery. Fruit pulp is used as 'shampoo' and cooling agent. It is used to cure mouth ulcers, very useful for stomach and intestinal disorders

***Terminalia arjuna*** Family: Combrataceae

English: Arjun; Malayalam: Nirmarutu, Venmarutu; Hindi: Arjun

It is a large evergreen tree commonly found in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Peninsular India. It has buttressed trunk and spreading crown with drooping branches. The bark is useful in fractures, ulcers, abnormal discharge from vagina and urethra, diabetes, fatigue, asthma, bronchitis, tumours, internal and external haemorrhages and hypertension. The bark powder is diuretic and has a general tonic effect in cases of cirrhosis of liver. The bark has been considered by the ayurvedic physicians as well as by modern practitioners as a cardiac tonic.

***Flacourtia jangomas*** Family: Flacourtiaceae

English: Puneala plum; Malayalam: Vaiyyankata; Hindi: Paniyala

A large deciduous shrub or a small spreading tree up to 9 m in height; found throughout India. Bark, leaves and fruits are useful in curing rheumatism, intense thirst, nausea, indigestion, flatulence, colic, diarrhea, inflammations, skin diseases, diabetes, jaundice and tumours.

***Mimusops elengi*** Family: Sapotaceae

English: Bullet-wood tree, West Indian Medlar; Malayalam: Ilanji; Hindi: Bakul

Evergreen tree with sweet-scented flowers, cultivated in North and Peninsular India and Andaman Islands. The bark and seed coat are used for strengthening the gum and enter into the composition of various herbal tooth powders. Garlands made of its flowers are ever in good

demand due to its long lasting scent. Tender stems are used as tooth brushes; also useful in diarrhoea and dysentery. Flowers are used for preparing a lotion for wounds and ulcers.

***Aporosa lindleyana*** Family: Euphorbiaceae

Malayalam: Vetti, Aechil, Ponvetti

Medium tree seen in semi evergreen and evergreen forests and in the plains. Seen in peninsular India and Sri Lanka. Roots are useful in treatment of mental disorders, headache, fever, jaundice. Leaves are used as shampoo for cleaning hair.

***Vateria indica*** Family: Dipterocarpaceae

English: Indian copal tree, Piney varnish tree, White dammar; Malayalam: Vellappayin, Velutta kunturukkam; Hindi: Saphed dammar, kahruba

Large handsome, evergreen tree 20-30 m height with grey thick bark often blotched with green and white; found in Western Ghats up to 1200 m along the streams. Bark, resin and oil have medicinal properties.

***Salix tetrasperma*** Family: Salicaceae

Malayalam: Arali, Attupala, Nirunji, Vanji; Hindi: Baings, Bend

Medium sized tree, bark with longitudinal furrows rough, young shoots silky, found throughout tropical and subtropical India, Sumatra and Java. The bark is used as a febrifuge.

***Artocarpus heterophyllus*** Family: Moraceae

English: Jackfruit tree; Malayalam: Plavu; Hindi: Kathal

A large monoecious evergreen tree with very dense rounded crown, found throughout India. The roots are credited with antidiarrhoeal property; the leaves are useful in fever, boils, wounds, skin diseases. The unripe fruits are acrid, astringent, carminative and tonic. The ripe fruits are sweet, cooling, laxative, aphrodisiac and tonic. The seeds are sweet, diuretic, aphrodisiac and constipating. The wood is nervine sedative and is useful in convulsions.

***Calotropis gigantea*** Family: Asclepiadaceae

English: Gigantic swallow wort; Malayalam: Errukku; Hindi: Madar

It is a large hardy milky shrub 1-5m in height distributed throughout India; grow in waste lands, by the roads and dry barren areas. Root is used in cutaneous diseases, cough, asthma, gastric secretions. Leaves used in paralysis, arthralgia, swellings and intermittent fevers; flowers used in anorexia and tumours.

***Prosopis cineraria*** Family: Mimosaceae

Malayalam: Vahni

Grown as a hedge throughout the dry and arid regions of India. Bark has anti-inflammatory activity, used in scorpion sting; flowers used to prevent miscarriage.

***Anthocephalus chinensis*** Family: Rubiaceae

Malayalam: Kadamba

A medium sized tree, about 20 m height and 1.5-2 m girth seen in moist and warm type of deciduous and evergreen forests. Bark is used in inflammation, gastric disorders, fever, cough, diarrhea, vomiting, burning sensation, uterine complaints, eye diseases, wounds, ulcers and debility. A decoction of the leaves is good for ulcers, wounds and worms. The fruits are useful in gastric irritability and fever. Root is diuretic.

***Mangifera indica*** Family- Anacardiaceae

English: Cuckoo's joy; Malayalam: Mavu; Hindi: Amb

It is a tree found through out tropics, adaptable to a wide range of climate and soil conditions and grows well from sea level up to about 1500m. It has cardiogenic and diuretic properties. Unripe fruit is acid, acid and astringent. Ripe fruit is laxative, nourishing and invigorating and refrigerant. Extract of leaves, bark and stems and unripe fruit exhibit moderate anti-bacterial activity.

***Borassus flabellifer*** Syn. Kariotta urines Family: Aracaceae

English: Brab tree; Malayalam: Karimpana, Trinarajan; Hindi: Tal

Found all over India, Ceylon and Burma; trunk attains 30 m in height and 60-90 cm. diameter; black swollen above the middle and again contracted upwards, old stems marked with the black narrow scars of the petioles. The fruit is sweet, cooling; intoxicating, fattening, aphrodisiac, tonic, laxative, useful in burning sensations, thirst, fatigue, blood complaints; The seed is diuretic and laxative. The fermented juice is tonic, fattening, aphrodisiac, intoxicating, expectorant; when freshly drawn it is useful in inflammatory affections and dropsy; slightly fermented it is used in diabetes. It is also diuretic and prescribed in chronic gonorrhoea. The root is considered diuretic and anthelmintic and is employed as cure for gonorrhoea

***Madhuca longifolia*** Family: Sapotaceae

English: Indian Butter tree; Malayalam: Ilippa; Hindi: Mahuwa

A large deciduous tree found in mixed deciduous forests. It is common throughout central India. Bark, leaves and flowers are useful in coughs, chronic bronchitis, general debility and piles. Oil obtained from seeds is useful for application in skin diseases and chronic rheumatism. It is also used in inflammations, sprains, epilepsy and dermatopathy.