

# Asian Resonance

## Plant Species Used as 'Bidi Leaves' in India: A Non Timber Forest Product

### Abstract

Many plant species are used as bidi leaves in various parts of India. The information included in this paper has been collected by various literature and field survey. The present paper communicates information about various plant species yielding leaves used in India for bidi rolling.

**Keywords:** Deciduous; Indigenous; Traditional; Tribal.

### Introduction

*Diospyros melanoxylon Roxb* is the main source of bidi leaves. It is medium sized deciduous trees, commonly known as Tendu trees. Tendu trees are abundantly found in Madhy pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Andhra pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttarpradesh, Gujrat, Tamilnadu and West Bengal.

Generally *Diospyros melanoxylon D. tomentosa*, two species of *Diospyros* are used for rolling bidi in different parts of the country. But some other leaves are also used in some parts of the country for bidi rolling. The present paper highlights these plant species.

### Material and Methods

Information from various literatures has been collected for receiving facts on plant species used as bidi leaves in different part of India. The study included literature survey, field work and interviews with concerned person of various sources (Datta, 1975; Gautam and Sharma, 2014; Ghelot,2013 ; Jain, 1965; Joshi 1995; Kamboj, 2000; Saxena and Trivedi ,2002; Vartak, 1982) Many plant species used as bidi leaves by tribal and local communities of different part of India have been pointed out in this study.

### Results and Discussion

The present study is an attempt to bring to light the knowledge of different plant species utilized by the tribal and rural people of the various locality of India for this purpose.

The leaves obtained from *Diospyros melanoxylon* are commercially called as bidi leaves. The bidi leaf tree is commonly known as 'Tendu' in Hindi, 'Abnus' in Telgu, 'Kendu' in Oriya, and Bengali, 'Tembru' in Gujarati, 'Kari' in Malayalam, 'Tembhurni' in Maharathi and 'Bali Tupra' in Tamil. The leaves are used for making bidi wrappers. The off-cuts of leaves are burnt and the ash is used as a constituent of tooth powder.

The tree generally occurs as an associate in sal (*Shorea robusta*) and teak (*Tectona grandis*) forests and dry mixed deciduous forests. Sometimes this tree forms pure consociation. The other species, *Diospyros tomentosa* is closely related to tendu leaf tree and the leaves are also used for making bidis. The tree is distributes in sub- Himalayan tract from Ravi to Nepal. It is also found in Rajasthan, Bihar, Orissa, Gujrat and northern parts of Andhra Pradesh.

The leaves obtained from *Holarrhena antidysenterica* are commercially called as Kuda leaves. The use of these leaves for bidi making is restricted in some part of Maharashtra, Goa and Andhra pradesh. The main centre of production of Kuda leaf bidi is Ratnagiri district (Maharashtra) and Goa. The market rate of these leaves is cheaper than the tendu leaves.

Next to tendu leaves, the leaves of *Bauhinia racemosa* are used for bidi making particularly in Maharashtra, Andhra pradesh, Gujrat, Tamilnadu and some parts of Karnataka. The leaves from Thana area (Maharashtra) are considered to be better in quality. Leaves harvested in April-May are preferred. Fresh leaves of *Artocarpus integrifolia* is also used as a bidi wrapper. This type of bidi is popular in fisher women of Goa. The leaf is wrapped into bidi by the smoker himself or herself.



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The leaves of *Musa paradisiaca* dried on the plant itself are also used as bidi wrapper. Leaves of different plant species used as bidi leaves in different part of India is being listed in Table.

**Table: Species Yielding Leaves Used in India for Bidi Rolling.**

Name of the plant species	Area where leaves are plucked for bidi rolling	Mode of uses
<i>Artocarpus integrifolia</i>	Goa	Green leaves used.
<i>Bauhinia racemosa</i>	Parts of Gujrat, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu	Leaves are moistened before rolling bidis. The leaves are dried in the same way as tendu leaves.
<i>Butea monosperma</i>	Tamilnadu and West Bengal	Leaves are boiled and dried before use.
<i>Cordia dichotoma</i>	South India	Young leaves used.
<i>Diospyros melanoxylon</i> and <i>Diospyros tomentosa</i>	Very extensively used almost throughout India	The leaves of coppice shoot are prepared for bidi wrapping.
<i>Holarrhena antidysenterica</i>	Southern Maharashtra and Goa	Fully matured leaves used. Leaves from coppice shoots and root suckers are considered better.
<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Goa	The leaves of banana dried on the plant itself, are used.

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