

## Scientific Name:

*Ficus benghalensis*

## Common Name:

- Banyan Tree
- Indian Banyan
- Peepal Tree

## Distinct Features:

- **Growth:** A large, spreading deciduous tree that can grow over 30 meters in height. It has a broad, thick trunk and can cover a substantial area due to its extensive aerial roots that can grow into new trunks.
- **Leaves:** The leaves are simple, glossy, and dark green, typically oval-shaped and can grow up to 20 cm long. They have a leathery texture and prominent veins.
- **Flowers:** The tree produces small, inconspicuous flowers that are found inside the fig. The flowers are unisexual and are pollinated by specific species of wasps, which play a crucial role in the tree's reproductive process.
- **Fruits:** The fruit is a syconium (an inverted flower structure) that contains many small seeds. The figs are generally small, round, and turn yellowish or purple when ripe.
- **Bark:** The bark is smooth and grayish-brown, becoming rougher with age.

## Cultural Importance:

- The Banyan Tree holds significant cultural and religious importance in India and many other countries. It is often considered sacred in Hinduism and is associated with longevity, wisdom, and immortality.
- The tree is a symbol of shelter and protection, and it is often found in temples and sacred sites.
- In many cultures, the Banyan Tree is seen as a gathering place for communities and is often planted in village centers as a place of shade and social interaction.

## Uses:

- **Ornamental:**
  - The Banyan Tree is widely planted for its aesthetic appeal and provides shade in parks, gardens, and public spaces. Its extensive canopy and aerial roots create a unique visual presence.
- **Medicinal:**
  - Various parts of the tree, including the bark, leaves, and figs, have been used in traditional medicine for their purported health benefits, including treating skin diseases, diabetes, and digestive issues.
- **Ecological:**
  - The tree provides habitat for various bird species and other wildlife, contributing to biodiversity. The figs are a food source for birds and mammals.

- **Cultural:**
  - The Banyan Tree is often used in cultural ceremonies and rituals, symbolizing endurance and the continuity of life.
- **Timber and Other Uses:**
  - The wood of the Banyan Tree is sometimes used for making furniture and handicrafts, although it is not as commercially valued as other types of hardwood.

### Picture Description:

- **Whole Tree:** A large, spreading tree with a thick trunk and extensive aerial roots. The canopy is broad and provides ample shade.
- **Leaves:** Glossy, dark green, oval-shaped leaves that are leathery and have prominent veins.
- **Flower:** Small, inconspicuous flowers that are found inside the fig structure, typically not visible.
- **Fruit:** Small, round figs that can be yellowish or purple when ripe, containing many tiny seeds.
- **Bark:** Smooth and grayish-brown when young, becoming rougher and more textured with age.

