

## Scientific Name:

*Lawsonia inermis*

## Common Name:

- Henna
- Mehndi

## Distinct Features:

- **Growth:** A flowering shrub or small tree that typically grows to a height of 2-6 meters. It has a bushy appearance and can be grown as a hedge or shaped into a small tree.
- **Leaves:** The leaves are simple, opposite, and ovate to elliptical in shape, measuring about 4-10 cm long. They are bright green and glossy, with a smooth texture. The leaves are aromatic when crushed.
- **Flowers:** The plant produces small, fragrant flowers that are white to pale yellow, often with a pink hue. The flowers are grouped in clusters and have five petals. They bloom in the summer and are known for their sweet scent.
- **Fruits:** The fruit is a small, round capsule that is about 1-2 cm in diameter. When mature, it splits open to release small seeds.
- **Bark:** The bark is smooth and light brown, becoming more textured with age.

## Cultural Importance:

- *Lawsonia inermis* holds significant cultural and historical importance in many regions, particularly in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. The leaves are used to make a dye for skin and hair, widely used in traditional body art known as mehndi or henna.
- In various cultures, henna is applied during weddings, festivals, and celebrations, symbolizing beauty, joy, and auspiciousness.

## Uses:

- **Cosmetic:**
  - The primary use of henna is for body art and hair dye. The leaves are dried, powdered, and mixed with liquid to create a paste that is applied to the skin or hair, leaving a reddish-brown stain.
- **Medicinal:**
  - In traditional medicine, henna has been used for various purposes, including as an antifungal, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory agent. It is also believed to promote hair health and is used to soothe skin irritations.
- **Culinary:**
  - In some cultures, the young leaves and shoots are used in salads or cooked dishes, although this is less common than its use in cosmetics.

- **Ecological:**
  - The flowers attract pollinators, including bees and butterflies, and the plant can contribute to local biodiversity.
- **Ornamental:**
  - *Lawsonia inermis* is sometimes grown as an ornamental shrub due to its attractive foliage and fragrant flowers.

### Picture Description:

- **Whole Plant:** A bushy shrub or small tree with dense green foliage, displaying clusters of small, fragrant flowers.
- **Leaves:** Bright green, glossy, ovate to elliptical leaves that are aromatic when crushed.
- **Flower:** Small, fragrant flowers that are white to pale yellow with a pink hue, grouped in clusters.
- **Fruit:** Small, round capsules about 1-2 cm in diameter that split open to release seeds when mature.
- **Bark:** Smooth and light brown when young, becoming more textured with age.

