

WILD EDIBLE FRUITS OF ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

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A B S T R A C T

The article enumerates 76 species of less known wild fruits occurring in Bay Islands.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian subcontinent is well known as a home of many delicious, edible fruits such as mango, banana, orange, and jack-fruit. In the past several centuries a good number of other fruits *viz.* custard apple, guava, pine-apple, papaya, pomegranate, grape, sapota, apple, pear, peach, plum, etc., have been introduced in different agroclimatic regions. In India fruit-plants were introduced during the ancient times through traders, invaders, travellers, etc. (Chadha & Pareek, 1988). Thus, the grape is reported to have been introduced in tropical India during 620 BC and subsequently by invaders from Afghanistan and Persia in 1300 AD. Pineapple reached India as early as in the year 1548. Similarly, fruits like guava and papaya were introduced in the 16th century and litchi in the 17th century. The main objective of this paper is to deal with collection, classification, utilization and conservation of some under-exploited/less known wild, edible fruits of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The Andaman and Nicobar group of Islands of Bay of Bengal consists of over 300 islands, situated on a submerged mountaneous hill range arching from the Arakkan-Yoma in Myanmar in the north to Sumatra in the south, between 6°-14° N latitudes and 92°-94° E longitudes, occupying an area of about 8,300 sq. km. These two groups of Islands, even though separated by ten degree channel (10°N), possess an apparently uniform tropical humid and warm climate, showing considerable variation in the biodiversity and vegetation patterns. The Bay Islands are subjected to both the south-west and

north-east monsoons. The mean relative humidity is about 82%, the average annual rain fall varies from 300 to 380 cm and the temperature between 22°C-32°C. Most of the Islands are covered with lush green vegetation, where the total forest cover is over 85%. The general pattern of vegetation of these pristine Islands, certainly belongs to the tropical evergreen category. The flora and fauna of Bay Islands are unique to India, just because of its insular nature, blessed with tropical humid climate. The aborigines of these Islands fall under two ethnic groups. While the Andaman Islands are inhabited by the tribes of Negrito stock, *viz.* Jarawas, Sentinelese, Great Andamanese and the Onges, the Nicobar Islands harbour, the tribals of Mangoloid origin, *viz.*, the Nicobarese and the Shompens.

In the present paper an attempt is being made to enumerate all the wild edible fruit plants, could be used as supplementary food and medicine by the local settlers and other people in the mainland, India. These edible fruit plants have been enumerated and arranged alphabetically, supplemented with adequate notes on their vernacular/common names, wherever available, flowering as well as fruiting season, brief botanical descriptions etc. The uses indicated in this paper are mainly based on authors' own observations, unless otherwise specified in parentheses.

ENUMERATION

Acacia pennata (L.) Willd. (Mimosaceae)

Tam. : *Vellai indu*; H. : *Aita*; Mar. : *Shembi* ;
Mal. : *Kareencha*.

Prickly, glabrescent, small trees, 5-6 m tall ; leaves pinnate, 6 cm long ; pinnae 12-15 pairs; leaflets alternate, 50-60 pairs ; flower heads pale ; pods strap-shaped, white, dry, distinctly stalked.

Fl. & Fr. : May – Oct.

Uses : Tender pods used as vegetable by Great Andamanese. Fruit pulp has pesticidal properties.

Distrib. : Very common throughout the Andaman Islands.

Aegle marmelos (L.) Correa (Rutaceae)

Burm. : *Okshit*; H. : *Bel*; Beng., Mar., Tam. & Mal. : *Vilvam*.

Trees, armed with 2-3 cm long spines; leaflets 3, ovate-lanceolate; flowers bisexual, greenish-white, fruits globose, 10-15 cm in diam.

Fl. : Mar. – May; *Fr.* : Apr. – Nov.

Uses : Fruits astringent, digestive and stomachic; used for diarrhoea and dysentery; pulp aromatic and cooling, used for preparing sharbat.

Cultivated in these Islands and occasionally seen wild.

Ardisia solanacea (Poir.) Roxb., *A. humilis* Vahl. (Myrsinaceae)

Shrubs. Leaves 15–22 × 5–7.5 cm obovate-oblong, cuneate, gland-dotted; veins indistinct. Flowers in racemes, waxy-pink, gland-dotted, 5-lobed, ovate-acute. Fruits globose, black with age.

Fl. & Fr. : Feb. – Sept.

Uses : Fruits eaten by Shompens (Chakraborty & Rao, 1988).

Distrib. : Middle Andaman, Long Island, Havelock Island, Rutland Island and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Artocarpus chama Buch.-Ham., *A. chaplasha* Roxb. (Moraceae)

Burm. : *Taungpeinne*.

Large deciduous trees, 25–30 m tall. Leaves up to 30 × 20 cm ovate or elliptic. Flower head globular, 0.3 cm long. Fruits 8–10 cm in diam., yellow when ripe.

Fl. : Feb. – Mar.; *Fr.* : May – July.

Uses : Fruits are eaten as vegetable by Great Andamanese and Nicobarese.

Distrib. : Frequent in all localities of these Islands.

A. communis Forst., *A. altilis* (Park.) Fosberg (Moraceae)

Eng. : *Bread fruit*; Mar. : *Vibayati phanas*;

Tel. : *Seema panasa*; Tam. : *Seema pila*.

Trees, 20–30 m tall. Leaf-blade pinnatifid ; 10–40 × 8–30 cm shortly acuminate at apex ; perianth ca 2 mm long ; ovary oblong, stigma simple, rarely bifid. Syncarps oblong or rounded, mature ones 15–20 × 10–15 cm. Seeds oblong, somewhat cylindric, 1.5–2.5 × 1–2 cm.

Fl. : Jan. – Mar. *Fr.* : June – Sept.

Uses : The fruits are starchy and edible (Ambasta, et al. 1986). After removing the outer rind, the fruits are sliced, boiled and eaten by the Nicobarese.

Distrib. : Cultivated in South sea Island.

A. gomezianus Well. ex Trech. ssp. *zeylanicus* Jarrett. (Moraceae)

H. : *Kala lakuch*; *Bara lakuch*.

Large trees, 15–25 m tall. Leaves 18–25 cm long, oblong to ovate, dark green. Receptacles ca 2 cm in diam. Fruit ca 5 cm long, ovoid-obovoid.

Fl. : Mar. – June; *Fr.* : July – Nov.

Uses : The sour fruits are dried and used as an alternative to tamarind in curries. Fleshy perianths and seeds eaten by tribes of Great Nicobar.

Distrib. : All localities in evergreen or semi-evergreen forests of these Islands.

Atlantia spinosa (Willd.) Tanaka, *A. monophylla* Correa, *A. malabarica* (Rapin.) Tanaka (Rutaceae)

Mar. : *Kokad limbu*; Eng. : *Wild lime*; H. : *Jungli nimbu*; Mal. : *Kattunaranga*.

Evergreen shrubs; spines few. Leaf blade ca 15 × 6 cm elliptic-lanceolate often slightly retuse,

olive-green. Inflorescence a cyme, white. Ovary glabrous; locule with 2 ovules. Berry yellow *ca* 2.5 cm in diam.

Fl. : Nov. – Feb.; *Fr.* : Feb. – May.

Uses : Fruits used for making pickles by Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : Throughout these Islands.

Baccaurea ramiflora Lour., *B. sapida* [Roxb. (Muell. – Arg.)]. (Euphorbiaceae)

Burm. : *Kanazo*; H. : *Kataphal*.

Trees, 5–15 m tall. Leaves 10–20 cm long, elliptic to obovate-lanceolate. Flowers creamy-yellow. Berries globular, velvety-yellow when ripe.

Fl. : Jan. – Mar.; *Fr.* : May – June.

Uses : With pleasantly acid taste, the pale pink pulp is eaten by the tribe Onges.

Distrib. : Fairly frequent in evergreen forests on the hills or along streams of these Islands.

Bauhinia tomentosa L. (Caesalpiniaceae)

H. : *Kachnar*; Mar. : *Aptu*; Guj. : *Pilo asundro* Tamil & Mal. : *Kanjanam*.

Shrubs or small trees, 5–8 m tall. Leaves 3.5–5.5 × 3.5–6.5 cm orbicular, apex obtuse to sub-acute at apex. Flowers yellow. Pods *ca* 10 × 1.5 cm oblong, compressed, reticulate; apex obtuse, horned. Seeds 10, *ca* 8 × 8 mm, ovoid, horizontal.

Fl. & Fr. : Aug. – Oct.

Uses : Seeds are used as a tonic by tribals (Ambasta, *et al.* 1986).

Distrib. : Andaman Islands.

Bombax insigne Wall. (Bombacaceae)

Eng. : *Silk cotton*; Burm. : *Didu*; H. : *Simal*.

Large prickly trees, 20–40 m tall. Leaflets 15–20 cm long, obovate, cuspidate, glaucous beneath. Flowers light red. Capsule glabrous.

Fl. : Jan. – Feb.; *Fr.* : Mar. – Apr.

Uses : Fruits stimulant, expectorant and diuretic. Seeds yield, an edible fatty oil.

Distrib. : Generally found in interior at forests and sometimes along the sea shore of these Islands.

Bouea oppositifolia (Roxb.) Meissn. (Anacardiaceae)

Burm. : *Mayan*; H. : *Marian*.

Small trees; leaves opposite, lanceolate to oblong or lanceolate, bluntly acuminate, glabrous. Flowers small, greenish-yellow. Fruits *ca* 3.5 cm long, ellipsoid, yellow when ripe.

Fl. : Jan. – Feb.; *Fr.* : Apr. – June.

Uses : Fruits taste like mango, eaten by tribal people.

Distr. : Evergreen forests in Middle Andaman, Baratang, Havelock, South Andaman.

Bruguiera gymnorrhiza (L.) Lam. (Rhizophoraceae)

Beng. : *Lankra*; Oriya : *Kekra*.

Straight stemmed trees, 10–25 m high; leaves 10–17 cm long, lanceolate, pale beneath, crowded at the ends of branchlets. Flowers solitary; pedicels *ca* 20 cm long, *ca* 2.45 cm in diam., faintly ribbed.

Fl. : Oct. – Nov.; *Fr.* : Dec. – Feb.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by Great Andamanese and Onges.

Distrib. : Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Bomlungta, Betapur, Yeratil.

Calamus andamanicus Kurz (Arecaceae)

Eng. : *Thick cane*; Burm. : *Thaing kyien*;

H. : *Mata bet*.

Large and high scandent trees. Stems *ca* 5 cm in diam., 25–35 cm long internodes. Leaves very large, 1.7–3 m long. Fruits *ca* 1.8 cm long, ovoid ellipsoid, conically backed.

Fl. : Nov. – Dec.; *Fr.* : Apr. – July.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : Common in Andaman & Nicobars.

C. viminalis Willd. var. **fasciculatus** Becc. (Arecaceae)

Burm. : *Kyein-ga*; H. : *Bet* (*Hasali bet*).

Slender scandent shrubs. Leaflets numerous, fascicled; rachis armed with scattered long straight spines.

Fl. : Nov. – Jan. ; *Fr.* : Mar. – June.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by children of Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : Around Port Blair, also in the forests of Middle and South Andamans.

Careya valida Kurz (Lecythidaceae)

Small trees. Leaves 15-25 × 6-10 cm lanceolate or elliptic, acuminate. Flowers pinkish. Fruits 4-angled, 10 cm long, brownish.

Fl. : Apr. – Nov.; *Fr.* : Nov. – Jan.

Uses : Fruits are generally eaten by Onge tribe.

Distrib. : Havelock Island, at the head of Muralatjig.

Coccinea grandis (L.) Voigt., *C. indica* Wight & Arn. (Cucurbitaceae)

Eng. : *Ivy gourd*; H. : *Tanaduri*, *Kali tori*.

Perennial dioecious climbing herbs. Leaves ovate-cordate, 5-angled or lobed. Flowers solitary, axillary. Fruits 2.5-5 cm long, ovoid, ellipsoid, scarlet when ripe. Seeds obovoid, compressed.

Fl. : June – Aug. ; *Fr.* : Aug. – Oct.

Uses : Raw fruits are used as vegetable, ripe ones are generally eaten (Ambasta, *et al.* 1986).

Distrib. : Andaman and Great Nicobar Islands.

Corypha umbraculifera L. (Arecaceae)

Eng. : *Talipot palm*; *Fan palm.*; San., Beng. & Mar. : *Tali*; Tam. : *Tali pannai*; Mal. : *Silalam*, *Talipponu*.

Erect palm, up to 25 m high. Stem stout or slender. Leaves simple, palmate, leaf stalks with massive spines. Inflorescences terminal. Carpels free. Seed without stony coat.

Fl. & Fr. : Mar. – July.

Uses : Seeds used as a substitute for ivory, kernel edible (Basu, 1988).

Distrib. : Found in Middle Andamans, Mt. Wimberley Gunj, South Andamans, Port Mouat, Baratang Island.

Cucumis melo L., *C. trigonus* Roxb. (Cucurbitaceae)

Eng. : *Wild cucumber*/*Snake cucumber*; H. : *Bhokura*; Beng. : *Gomuk*.

Perennial, prostrate herbs. Leaves *ca* 9 × 8 cm triangular or ovate, 3-7 lobed, scabrid. Flowers small, solitary, corolla yellow. Fruits 2-3 × 4 cm yellow with green stripes.

Fl. : June – July ; *Fr.* : Aug. – Nov.

Uses : Ripe as well as unripe fruits are eaten as vegetable (Parkinson, 1923). Pulp is used as a purgative. Seeds are used in treatment of bilious disorders.

Distrib. : Common at sea level. Little Andaman and Katchal Islands.

Cycas rumphii Miq. (Cycadaceae)

Andamanese : *Arguna*; Tam. : *Kama*; Tel. : *Ranagurava*; Mal. : *Tutappana*.

An elegant evergreen palm like tree. Leaflets flat, acuminate subcaudate at apex. Fruits orange when ripe.

Fl. : Nov. – Jan. ; *Fr.* : Mar. – July.

Uses : The chopped seeds and dried in sun and ground into flour, cooked with grated coconut are eaten by Nicobarese; boiled seeds are also eaten by Onge tribals. Seed pulp is applied in stomach pain by Nicobarese and Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : Common in the littoral zone along the coasts.

Cyclea peltata (Lam.) Diels. *C. burmanni* Hk.f. Thomas (Menispermaceae)

Herbaceous twiners. Leaf-blades ovate, acute and slightly hastate at base, shiny above. Drupes 4-5 mm long, white, glabrescent.

Fl. & Fr. : All seasons.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by the Onge tribe.

Distrib. : Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Dendrolobium umbellatum (L.) Benth. (Fabaceae)

Shrubs, *ca* 1.5-2.0 m high. Leaves 5-8 cm. Flowers greenish-yellow in umbellate cymes, green, glabrous. Pods 3-5 cm long.

Fl. & Fr. : Throughout the year.

Uses : Pods are eaten by Burmese.

Distrib. : Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Diospyros andamanica Kurz., *Maba andamanica* Kurz, *D. pyrrhocarpa* Miq. (Ebenaceae)

Burm., Tel. & H. : *Tendu*.

Trees 9-15 m tall. Leaves 10-12 cm long, elliptic, oblong, acuminate. Flower creamy-white. Fruits *ca* 3 cm diam., globular, yellow when ripe.

Fl. : Feb. – Mar.; *Fr.* : Apr. – June.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by Shompens.

Distrib. : Common in South Andamans.

D. pilosula Wall. ex Hiern. *D. pilosiuscula* Wall. ex G. Don (Ebenaceae)

H. : *Tendu*.

Small trees. Leaves 2.5 – 8 cm elliptic to elliptic-lanceolate, dark green. Flower yellowish. Fruits *ca* 2 cm in diam, globular.

Fl. : May – June; *Fr.* : Oct. – Nov.

Uses : Ripe fruits are eaten by Shompens of Great Nicobar Island.

Distrib. : South Andamans; Great Nicobar, Common.

Dolichandrone spathacea (L. f.) K. Schum. (Bignoniaceae)

Beng. : *Gorshingiah*.

Tall, deciduous trees. Leaves *ca* 30 cm long, imparipinnate, leaflets, 15-20, elliptic, acuminate. Flowers solitary ; corolla white. Capsules nearly straight up to 45 cm long.

Fl. : May – June ; *Fr.* : June – Dec.

Uses : Immature fruits and flowers are eaten by Burmese as vegetables, occasionally by Onges also.

Distrib. : In creeks and mangroves of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Dracaena angustifolia Roxb. (Agavaceae)

Burm. : *Seiksa*; H. : *Backripati*.

A slender tree, up to 5 m high. Leaves 30-60 cm long, lanceolate or linear-lanceolate. Panicles yellowish. Fruits orange when ripe.

Fl. & Fr. : Mär. – June.

Uses : Ripe fruits are eaten by Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : Common and frequent along the coasts.

Dracontomelon dao (Blanco) Merr. & Rolfe (Anacardiaceae)

Burm. : *Chinyok*.

Tall handsome trees, 15-30 m high. Leaves imparipinnate; leaflets 12-20, alternate, subopposite. Flowers greenish-white. Drupes 2.5 – 3 cm in diam., depressed globose, yellow when ripe.

Fl. & Fr. : Feb. – June.

Uses : Fruits sour, used for flavouring curries.

Distrib. : Frequent in all localities especially in damp places along the streams.

Elaeagnus conferta Roxb. *E. latifolia* auct. non L. (Elaeagnaceae)

Burm. : *Hamangu*; H. : *Khataphal*; Eng. : *Bustard oleastar*; Beng. : *Guara*; Mar. : *Ambgul*; Tam. : *Kolungai*; Mal. : *Kayalampuvalli*.

Unarmed scandent shrubs. Leaf-blades elliptic-ovate. Flowers fascicled. Drupes 2 – 2.5 cm long, red.

Fl. : Dec. – Jan.; *Fr.* : Feb. – Mar.

Uses : Used for excellent tarts and jellies.

Distrib. : Fairly common in many localities of Andamans and rare in Nicobar Islands.

Entada pursaetha DC. *E. scandens* auct. Plur. non (L.) Benth. (Mimosaceae)

Eng. : *Mackay bean/Sword bean; Match Box bean; Garbee bean*; Burm. : *Gon-nyin*; H. & Beng. : *Gila*; Tam. : *Vattavalli*; Mal. : *Kekkavalli*.

An ascending climber with twisted and angled stems; leaf bipinnate; leaflets 4-8, ovate, glossy. Flowers pale yellow, pod woody, *ca* 1 m long, brown.

Fl. : Mar. – Apr.; *Fr.* : June – Aug.

Uses : Seeds are used as tonic, emetic and anthelmintic by the tribals.

Distrib. : Abundant in Andamans especially in the interior localities and along the sea shore.

***Ficus carica* L. (Moraceae)**

Burm. : *Dumer*; H. : *Anjir*; Tel. : *Bodala*.

A small tree or bush. Leaves *ca* 20 × 18 cm, broadly ovate to nearly orbicular or 3-5 lobed, cordate, crenate, serrate. Receptacles solitary or paired, axillary, about 2.5 × 2.2 cm globose, yellowish, pruple when ripe.

Receptacles : Jan. – Apr.; *Ripe figs* : June. – Oct.

Uses : Eaten by Bengalees in curry.

Distrib. : Frequent in these Islands.

***F. hispida* L. f. (Moraceae)**

Beng. : *Domoor*; Burm. : *Ka-aung*; H. : *Katgularia*; Tam. & Mal. : *Peyothi*; Mar.: *Bhokada*.

Erect, hispid shrubs or small trees, internodes hollow. Leaves opposite, oblong, abruptly acuminate. Racemes peduncled; receptacles obovoid, yellowish when ripe.

Fl. & Fr. : Nov. – Jan.

Uses : Ripe fruits are used for making jams and immature fruits used in curries by tribals of Great Nicobar.

Distrib. : Frequent along streams.

***F. magnoleaefolia* Bl. (*F. nervosa* auct. non Heyne) (Moraceae)**

Tall trees, up to 33 m high. Leaves 13 – 21 × 4.5–10.5 cm elliptic to oblong, apex acute, base

cuneate. Figs. solitary in leaf axils, globose 1.5 cm diam.

Fr. : Ripe in Feb. – Mar.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : In many localities of evergreen forests.

***F. nervosa* Heyne ex Roth (Moraceae)**

Tam. : *Neer-aal*.

Large trees. Leaf-blades elliptic or oblanceolate. Figs in axillary pairs, peduncled, glabrescent, orange or red when ripe.

Fr. : Feb.

Uses : Ripe fruits are eaten by tribals.

Distrib. : In evergreen forests.

***F. recemosa* L. *F. glomerata* Roxb. (Moraceae)**

Beng. : *Dumur* ; Guj. : *Umar*; H. : *Gular*; Mal. : *Athi* ; Mar. : *Umbar*; Tam. : *Kan* ; Tel. : *Atti*.

Trees 10-13 m. Leaves 15-20 cm long, oblong, obovate to lanceolate. Figs *ca* 2.5 cm in diam., pear shaped.

Fr. : Feb. – Mar.

Uses : Powder from roasted fruits is used for breakfast by Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : Middle Andaman & South Andamans, Havelock.

***F. religiosa* L. (Moraceae)**

Beng. : *Pakar*; Burm. : *Nyaung-bawdi*; Guj. : *Jari*; H. : *Pipal*; Mal. : *Arachu*; Mar. : *Pinapala*; Tam. : *Arasu*.

Large trees. Leaves glabrous, chartaceous. Figs in axillary pairs, purple ripe.

Fr. : Dec. – Mar.

Uses : Fruits and tender buds are eaten during scarcity; laxative.

Distrib. : Long Island, Havelock, South Andaman, Rutland. Fairly frequent in deciduous forests.

Ficus rumphii Bl. (Moraceae)

Beng. : *Gaiaswat*; H. : *Gagjaira*; *Pakar*; Mar. : *Astit*.

Large tree, 15-25 m tall. Leaves 7-14 × 5-10 cm ovate, acuminate. Figs *ca* 1.5 cm in diam.

Fr. : Dec. – Mar.

Uses : Ripe fruits are occasionally eaten.

Distrib. : Generally occurs in deciduous forests of South Andamans.

Flagellaria indica L. (Flagellariaceae)

Beng. : *Banchanda*; H. : *Harcharal*; Mal. & Tam. : *Panambuvalli*.

Climbing shrubs with long slender stems. Leaves lanceolate, tips tendrilar. Fruits small, globose or ovoid drupe.

Fl. : Aug. – Sept.; Fr. : Oct. – Dec.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by Shompens.

Distrib. : Frequent along the sea-shores.

Garcinia andamanica King (Clusiaceae)

Burm. : *Madaw*.

Trees *ca* 5-10 m high. Leaves 20-40 cm long, elongate-ovate. Flowers greenish-white. Fruits globular, bright yellow *ca* 3 cm in diam.

Fl. : Jan. – Feb.; Fr. : Feb. – Mar.

Uses : Acidic fruits are eaten by Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : Found in evergreen forests in damp places along the streams.

G. cowa Roxb. ex DC. (Clusiaceae)

Burm. : *Taung thale*; H. : *Khataphal*.

Trees, 12-21 m tall. Leaves 10-15 cm long, lanceolate, shortly acuminate, glossy above, glabrous beneath. Flowers yellow. Fruits depressed globular with shallow grooves, lime-sized, yellow when ripe.

Fl. : Jan. – Feb.; Fr. : May – June.

Uses : Pulp with pleasant taste, eaten by tribal people and Burmese of these Islands.

Distrib. : In ever-green and semi-evergreen forests of South Andamans.

G. microstigma Kurz (Clusiaceae)

Burm. : *Juangthale-anee*.

Small trees, 5-15 m tall. Leaves 5-10 × 3-5 cm elliptic to ovate or lanceolate. Flowers red. Fruits slightly depressed, glossy, dark red when ripe, *ca* 2.3 cm in diam.

Fl. : Jan. – Mar.; Fr. : July – Aug.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by tribal people and Burmese of these Islands.

Distrib. : Betapur, Bomlungtan, Rangat Bay, Mt. Farrington, South Andamans.

G. xanthochymus Hk. f. & T. And. (Clusiaceae)

Beng. : *Chalata*; Burm. : *Madaw*; Guj. : *Marota*; H. : *Tamal*; Mal. : *Anavauya*; Tam. : *Makki*.

Handsome trees, 10-15 m tall. Leaves narrowly oblong to oblong-lanceolate. Flowers greenish-white, fruits globose, 5-6 cm in diam., dark yellow when ripe.

Fl. : Feb. – May; Fr. : Nov. – Feb.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by tribals and children of jungle areas.

Distrib. : Usually occur in evergreen forests of Andamans.

Gnetum gnemon L. (Gnetaceae)

Evergreen large climbers with twisted stem. Leaves simple, opposite, elliptic, apiculate, glossy dark green. Cones green, fruits orange when ripe.

Fl. : Nov. – Dec.; Fr. : May – June.

Uses : Fruits eaten boiled or roasted, processed seeds are also eaten. Raw fruits and seeds are eaten by Nicobarese.

Distrib. : Common in many localities in evergreen forests of Andamans.

Gnetum latifolium Bl. (Gnetaceae)

Large twisted climbers.

Fl. & Fr. : Jan. – May.

Uses : Kernels are eaten after roasting or cooking by the aboriginals.

Distrib. : Common in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

G. montanum Mark., *G. scandens* Roxb. (Gnetaceae)

Burm. : *Subrut.*

Large climbers. Leaves simple, opposite, green. Cones green. Fruits orange when ripe.

Fl. : Oct. – Nov.; *Fr.* : Mar. – May.

Uses : Fruits are eaten after roasted or cooked.

Distrib. : Common in many localities of Andamans.

Grewia calophylla Kurz (Tiliaceae)

A moderate sized tree, 6-12 m tall with dense dark foliage. Leaves 10-15 × 5-7 cm elliptic or ovate. Flowers *ca* 1 cm long, cream colour with pungent smell. Drupe *ca* 2.5 cm long, obovoid fleshy, fibrous, orange yellow when ripe.

Fl. : May – July; *Fr.* : Dec. – Mar.

Uses : Fruits edible.

Distrib. : Common.

Hemicyclia andamanica Kurz (*H. elata* Bedd.) (Euphorbiaceae)

Beng. & Mar. : *Anantamul*; Guj. : *Sariva*; H. : *Kapuri*; Mal. : *Naruniti*, *Sogade dha*.

Moderate sized trees, 15-25 m tall. Leaves 8-10 × 2.5-3.5 cm ovate, oblong-acuminate. Flowers small. Fruits *ca* 2 cm long, smooth-red when ripe.

Fl. : Feb. – Mar.; *Fr.* : May – June.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by the tribals.

Distrib. : Found in damp or dry places of Andamans.

Indigofera glandulosa Roxb. ex Willd. (Fabaceae)

Guj. : *Vekhariyo*; Mar. : *Bargadan*; Tam. : *Baragadam*, *Barapatam*.

Sub-shrubs, up to 80 cm high. Leaves 3-foliate, leaflets 1.5-2.5 × 0.5-0.8 cm oblanceolate, apex obtuse. Flowers axillary, red. Pods oblong *ca* 6 mm wide, deflexed.

Fl. & Fr. : Sept. – Nov.

Uses : Seeds are nutritive and used as tonic, occasionally used as food at times of scarcity.

Distrib. : Introduced in Port Blair.

Litchi chinensis Sonner., *Nephelium litchi* Camb., *L. Chimensis* (Gaertn) Sonner. *Seytalia litchi* Roxb. (Sapindaceae)

Eng. : *Chinese litchi*; H. : *Litchi*.

A small tree. Leaves paripinnate, leaflets 4-12, opposite or alternate, oblong-lanceolate, acuminate, glabrous. Flowers minute. Fruits red or pink when ripe *ca* 2.5 cm in diam.

Fl. : Mar. – Apr.; *Fr.* : May – July.

Uses : A source of Arachidic acid, edible.

Distrib. : It has been introduced in Andamans.

Mangifera andamanica King (Anacardiaceae)

Eng. : *Mango*; H. & Beng. : *Am*.

Trees, 10-15 m high. Leaves 5-10 cm long, obovate-oblanceolate. Flowers white. Fruits ellipsoid, *ca* 3 cm long, yellow when ripe.

Fl. : Jan. – Feb.; *Fr.* : Apr. – June.

Uses : Fruits as laxative, diuretic and seeds used in asthma.

Distrib. : South Andaman, Mt. Harriet.

M. camptosperma Pierre (Anacardiaceae)

Burm. : *Taw-thayet*, *Sinin-thayet*; H. : *Jungli Am*.

A large tree, 15-30 m tall. Leaves 12.5-25 cm long, lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate, shortly acuminate. Flowers white in ample terminal panicles. Drupe as large as mango, much compressed, yellow when ripe.

Fl. : May – June; *Fr.* : June – Aug.

Uses : Fruits are edible (Chakraborty & Rao, 1988).

Distrib. : Found in Middle Andaman, South Andaman, Long Island, Baratang, Rutland and Gt. Nicobar Islands.

Mangifera sylvatica Roxb. (Anacardiaceae)

Burm. : *Taw-thayet*, *Sinin thayet*; H. : *Jungli Am*.

Large trees, 15-30 m tall. Leaves 1.5-3.0 m lanceolate, shortly acuminate. Flowers white. Drupes compressed, yellow when ripe.

Fl. & Fr. : June – Sept.

Uses : Unripe fruits are used for tarts, pickles, jellies preparation.

Distrib. : Found in Middle and South Andamans.

Manilkara littoralis (Kurz) Dub., *Mimusops littoralis* Kurz (Sapotaceae)

Burm. : *Pinle-mohwa*, *Dogola*, H. : *Khari mohwa*.

Large magnificent trees, 20-40 m tall. Leaves 10-20 × 5-10 cm obovate, dark green. Flowers greenish-white, fragrant, sweet. Berries depressed, globose.

Fl. : June – July; *Fr.* : Dec.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by Great Andamanese and Onges.

Distrib. : Common along the sea shores of the Islands.

Momordica cochinchinensis (Lour.) Spreng. (Cucurbitaceae)

Beng. : *Kakrod*; Guj. : *Karapata*; H. : *Gulkakra*; Mar. : *Kakana*; San. : *Karkataka*; Tel. : *Adavi kakara*.

Climbers, branches green, leaves smooth, dark green, petiole with glossy small glands, fruits 10-15 cm in diam., orange red when ripe.

Fl. : May – July; *Fr.* : Aug. – Nov.

Uses : Tender fruits are eaten as vegetable; fruits are also used as external application for lambago,

fracture and ulceration. Seeds used in the treatment of ulcers.

Distrib. : Frequent in sandy soil of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

M. dioica Roxb. ex Willd. (Cucurbitaceae)

Beng. : *Bankarela*; H. : *Kaksa*; Mar. : *Kartoli*; Tam. : *Tholooavi*.

Tuberous rooted, dioecious climbers. Tendrils simple. Leaves ca 10 × 6 cm 3-5 lobed, cordate. Flowers solitary; corolla yellow. Fruits 3-5 × 2 cm ovoid, rostrate at apex, orange coloured, muricate.

Uses : The fruits are eaten as vegetable by Shompens and others.

Distrib. : Frequent in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Morinda citrifolia L. *M. bracteata* (Roxb.) Hk. f. (Rubiaceae)

Guj. & Mar. : *Al*, *Ach surangi*; Mal. : *Kattapitalavam*, *Mannanatti*; Tam. : *Nuna*, *Togaru*.

Small littoral trees. Leaves 15-25 cm long, elliptic, glabrous. Flowers white. Fruits green, succulent.

Fl. & Fr. : Apr. – July.

Uses : Fruits are used for throat complaints, dysentery; edible.

Distrib. : Great. Nicobar & South Andaman.

Musa sapientum L. *M. pardisiaca* L. (Musaceae)

H. : *Kadalikala*; Mal. : *Vazha*.

Pseudostems swollen, 4 m tall. Leaves 1-2 m long. Bracts maroon ca 20 × 15 cm. Flowers 20-30 in a bract. Berries trigonous. Seeds brown.

Fl. & Fr. : All seasons.

Uses : Fruits are tasty and edible (Chakraborty & Rao, 1988).

Distrib. : Moist places along the streams of Great Nicobar.

Nelumbo nucifera Gaertn. (Nymphaeaceae).

Sans., Beng. & Oriya : *Padam*, *Padma*; H. & Mar. : *Kamala*.

Petioles up to 2 m long, leaf-blades circular, waxy, glaucous beneath, up to 60 cm across, outer tepals greenish-white, inner tepals rosy white, receptacle 5-8 cm across, fleshy. Ripened carpels nut-like.

Fl. & Fr. : May – Nov.

Uses : Fruits carpels, eaten raw by children. Rhizomes, young leaves, petioles and flowers are used as vegetables. Rhizomes yield a kind of nutritive arrowroot given to children during diarrhoea and dysentery.

Distrib. : In ponds of North & South Andaman Islands.

Neolamarekia cadamba (Roxb.) Bosser [*Anthocephalus cadamba* (Roxb.) Miq. (*A. chinensis* (Lamk.) A. Rich. ex Walp)] (Rubiaceae)

Large trees, 25-35 m tall; leaves 15-25 cm long, ovate or elliptic-oblong; flowers white and yellow; fruits fleshy receptacle closely packed with yellowish capsules.

Fl. : June – July; *Fr.* : Aug. – Sept.

Uses : Ripe fruits bitter.

Distrib. : Throughout these Islands.

Nypa fruticans Wurm. (Arecaceae).

Eng. : *Water coconut/Dhani palm*; Burm. : *Dhani*.

A palm with underground stems. Leaves 4.5-9 m long, resembling coconut palm. Leaflets 1.2-1.5 m. Fruits 4-6, rigid, turbinate, compressed, angular.

Fl. : Feb. – Apr.; *Fr.* : May – July.

Uses : Fruits are sweet, used for making jaggery, sugar, alcohol and vinegar. Fruits are also eaten by Nicobarese and Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : Along many tidal creeks in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Oroxylum indicum (L.) Vent., *Bignonia indica* L., *Calosanthes indica* Bl. (Bignoniaceae)

Beng. : *Sanpatti*; Eng. : *Sword fruit*; Guj. : *Tentu*; H. : *Ullu*; Mal. : *Palagapaiyani*; Mar. : *Tetu*.

Moderate sized soft wood trees. Leaves opposite, 1.5 m long, pinnate, bipinnate or tripinnate.

Flowers on erect terminal racemes, evil-smelling. Fruits flat woody, scarcely 1.2 cm thick, 6 cm wide, 35-75 cm long.

Fl. : June – Nov.; *Fr.* : Nov. – Feb.

Uses : Tender fruits are refreshing and used as stomachic, seeds are purgative. Young fruits are eaten by Burmese as vegetable.

Distrib. : Common in deciduous forests and often along streams of Andamans.

Pandanus andamanensis Kurz, *P. amaryllifolius* Roxb., *P. odoratissimus* Kurz (Pandanaeae)

Burm. : *Kasan*; H. : *Keora*.

Elegant trees, 10-15 m tall with numerous sharp prickles. Leaves 35-45 × 7-10 cm sword-shaped, spinulose. Fruits scarlet, size of a man's head.

Fl. & Fr. : July – Oct.

Uses : Fruits are eaten, made into Pandanus cheese with honey by Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : All localities of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

P. lherum Junes (Pandanaeae)

Eng. : *Nicobar Bread Fruit*; H. : *Kewra*.

A wild shrub or tree in the Nicobar and Andaman Islands.

Fl. & Fr. : July – Oct.

Uses : Fruits are used for making flour/bread and eaten with honey. Fruits are eaten by Nicobarese, Shompens and Onges.

Distrib. : Usually occurs in marshy places in the coastal forests of Andamans. Rare in Nicobar Islands.

P. tectorius Parkin., *P. fascicularis* Lam., *P. odoratissimus* Roxb.

Burm. : *Sathapu*; Eng. : *Nicobar Bread Fruit*.

Dioecious shrubs or trees. Leaves 1-2 m long. Flowers white, fragrant. Fruits 15-25 cm. long, oblong or globose, yellow or red when ripe.

Fl. & Fr. : May – July & July – Oct.

Uses : The tribals boil the orange coloured fruits and make a pulp called "Pandanus cheese" which is eaten with honey. Fruits are also eaten by Nicobarese and Great Andamanese.

Distrib. : Common along sea shores of these Islands.

Phoenix paludosa Roxb. (Arecaceae)

Beng. : *Hital*; Burm. : *Thinbaung*; H. : *Khajur*.

Slender palms with annular stems. Leaves 1-2 m long. Leaflets 30-60 cm long, arranged in pairs, glossy. Flowers yellow. Fruits orange red and turning black when ripe.

Fl. : Feb. – Apr.; **Fr. :** June – Dec.

Uses : Fruits are edible and antiphlogestic.

Distrib. : Cinque Island, Mt. Ford, Rutland, Portman Bay.

Physalis minima L., *P. pubescens* Wight (Solanaceae)

Beng. : *Tepariya*; Guj. : *Propti*; H. : *Tulatipat*; Mal. : *Njodinjotha*.

Herbs, 50-80 cm high. Leaves 6-10 × 4-6 cm, elliptic-ovate. Flowers yellowish-purple. Fruits 1.5 × 0.7 cm.

Fl. & Fr. : All seasons.

Uses : Fruits and leaves are consumed by Onges, also used as tonic, diuretic and purgative.

Distrib. : North, Middle, South Andaman, Little Andaman; North & South-Nicobars.

Robus moluccanus L., *R. angulatus* Kalkman (Rosaceae)

Stems robust with hooked prickles. Leaves 5-25 cm long; petioles 5-8 cm long, sparsely tomentose. Flowers axillary in capitate clusters, white. Fruits globose, succulent, receptacle villous.

Fl. & Fr. : Feb. – Oct.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by Shompen tribes (Chakraborty & Rao, 1988).

Distrib. : Common in all localities of Islands.

Salacia chinensis L., *S. latifolia* Wall. ex M. Laws., *S. prnoides* DC. (Celastraceae)

Beng. : *Dimal*; Mal. : *Cherukuranti*; Mar. : *Inlyi*; Trade-saptranga.

Shrubs with angular branchlets. Leaves opposite, 5-8 cm long, lanceolate. Flowers greenish yellow.

Fl. : Jan. – Feb.; **Fr. :** Feb. – May.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by Onges.

Distrib. : Littoral forests, mangroves and tidal creeks of South & Little Andamans; Great Nicobar.

Sarcostigma kleinii W. & A. *S. wallichii* Baill. (Icacinaeae)

Mal. : *Velleodal*. *Odal*, *Puvenna*; San. : *Jugudi*.

Profusely branched, climbing shrubs. Leaves 10-18 × 3.5-9.5 cm oblong-lanceolate, acute. Spikes pendulous. Flowers yellow. Drupes 3 × 1.5 cm elliptic-oblong, smooth, orange-red.

Fl. : Dec.; **Fr. :** Jan.

Uses : Fruits are eaten by Great Andamanese. Seeds yield a fatty oil, seed meal used as a feed after extraction of oil.

Distrib. : Middle Andaman, South Andaman, Baratang, Havelock.

Schleichiera oleosa (Lour.) O. Ken (Sapindaceae)

Beng., H. & Guj. : *Kusum*; Mal. : *Puvam*; Mar. : *Kusumb*; Oriya : *Kusamo*; Tam. : *Pulachi*.

Leaves bright red when young, leaf axis 10-12 cm long, leaflets oblong, lanceolate, truncate at base, ca 18 × 8 cm coriaceous shiny above. Flowers greenish-white. Fruits up to 1.5 × 1 cm slightly rough.

Fl. & Fr. : Feb. – May.

Uses : Raw fruits pickled, young shoots and ripe fruits are edible. Seeds yield a fatty oil called as "Macassar oil".

Distrib. : Rare in Andamans.

Spondias cytherea Sonn. (Anacardiaceae)

Eng. : *Great Hogplum*; *Golden apple*. H. : *Bilaeiti amara*.

Leaves imparipinnate, 20-30 cm, leaflets 13-15, ovate-oblong, panicles 20-30 cm long, flowers polygamous, whitish, drupe ovoid up to 7.5 cm long.

Fl. : Mar. – Apr.; Fr. : Aug. – Nov.

Uses : It has flavour like mango and pine-apple. Used for delicious juice, beverages, sharbat, jelly, pickles, marmalodes, flavouring sources, soups & stews, etc.

Distrib. : Middle & South Andamans, Long Island, Richie's Archipelago & Rutland.

S. pinnata (L.f.) Kurz (Anacardiaceae)

Beng. : *Amna/Imbra*; Burm. : *Amra*; Eng. : *Hog plum*; Guj. & Mar. : *Ranamba*.

Deciduous trees up to 8 m high. Leaflets 6-10, elliptic, rounded below. Flowers white. Fruits drupaceous, ca 2.5 × 2 cm, rounded.

Fl. & Fr. : Jan. – Aug.

Uses : Astringent and scorbic; used for making chutney, pickles, jam, stews etc. (Rao & Sreekumar, 1990).

Distrib. : Middle & South Andamans.

Syzygium samarangense Merr. & Perry. (Myrtaceae)

Burm. : *Tawthabye*; H. : *Jungli Jamun*.

Moderate sized trees, up to 15-20 m high. Leaves 10-15 cm long, ovate to elliptic, acuminate. Flowers white, fruits globose, ca 1.5 cm in diam.

Fl. : Feb. – May; Fr. : June – Aug.

Uses : Fruit juice is consumed as a cooling agent by Nicobarese.

Distrib. : Frequent along sea shores of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. North, Middle & South Andamans; Archipelago, Rutland.

Terminalia bialata Steud. (Combretaceae)

Eng. : *Andaman ash*; *Silver grey*; H. : *Safed chuglam*.

Large and tall trees, 35-50 m high. Leaves 15-20 × 7.5 × 10.0 cm obovate, shortly acuminate. Flowers yellowish-white. Fruits butterfly shaped.

Fl. : April – May; Fr. : July – Sept.

Uses : Seeds are usually eaten by the children, taste like ground nut.

Distrib. : North, Middle & South Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

T. catappa L. (Combretaceae)

Eng. : *India almond tree*; H. : *Badam*.

Large tree. Leaves shortly petiolate, obovate, base, narrow-cordate. Flowers yellowish-white. Fruits globose, ellipsoid, compressed, ridged.

Fl. : Mar. – Apr.; Fr. : July – Sept.

Uses : Raw seeds are eaten by Shompens, tastes like ground nuts.

Distrib. : Frequently along sea shores of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

T. manii King (Combretaceae)

Eng. : *Black chuglum*; H. : *Kala chuglum*.

Tall trees, 30-45 m high. Leaves scattered 10-20 × 3.75-7.5 cm ovate-elliptic lanceolate. Flowers yellowish-white. Fruits 2.8 cm long, ovoid and pointed, obscurely ridged.

Fl. : May – July; Fr. : Nov. – Dec.

Uses : Seeds are eaten by Shompens which taste like ground nut.

Distrib. : Frequently found in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

T. procera Roxb. (Combretaceae)

Eng. : *White bomway*; H. : *Safed bomway*; *Badam*.

Trees, 25-35 m tall. Leaves 12.5-25 × 5-10 cm obovate, tapering towards base. Flowers starshaped, white. Drupes ca 3.7 cm long, ellipsoid, obscurely angled.

Fl. : Mar. – April ; Fr. : July – Sept.

Uses : Seeds are edible and liked by Shompens.

Distrib. : Very common in all localities of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Ximenia americana L. *X. spinosa* Salisb. (Olacaceae)

Burm. : *Pinle-zi*; Eng. : *The false rounded woods*; Tam. : *Chiruillantai*.

Shrubs or small trees; spines short. Leaves alternate. Flowers yellowish-white, fragrant. Fruits like a small lime, yellow when ripe.

Fl. : Feb.; **Fr. :** Mar. – June.

Uses : Wild plums are used as substitute for lemons. Kernels are eaten raw or roasted. Fruits and seeds are laxative. Fruits are eaten by Onge tribes.

Distrib. : Generally occurs all along sea shores of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

CONCLUSION

India is yet to evaluate seriously several less known edible fruits which have immense potential for cultivation. In spite of the rich indigenous resource in several fruits, India has received a good number of fruit plants from other countries since time immemorial.

The diverse agro-climatic conditions helped not only in their acclimatisation, but also in successful commercial utilisation. A systematic attempt in this regard with a broad objective, to analyse the nutritional value of each wild edible fruit species of Andaman & Nicobar Islands is an urgent need. To flag off this venture, the primary objective would be on the introduction and *ex situ* conservation of wild fruit stocks of these pristine Islands into the botanical gardens and research gardens in mainland to study and improve the productivity and quality of the fruit crops. The wild germplasm of the rare or endangered fruit plants, should be conserved *in situ* also especially in the core zones of the Biosphere Reserves. Since many of our tropical fruits are being

air-lifted from the mainland and thereby sold in the local markets at an exorbitant rates, exploitation of our vast and so far untapped, wild germplasm resources need to be carried out with a sense of urgency. It would certainly add some financial support and generate self-employment to the local people of our Islands and we hope that this check-list would supply the base-line data for any further investigations on the introduction, propagation, utilisation and conservation aspects of our wild genetic resources. Besides, it is also imperative to popularise and fully utilize the promising wild edible fruits which are growing uncared in these Islands.

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