



100 Year Old Trees of Chennai

A Living Green Legacy



“ Planting trees is not an event; it is a commitment to the future. Every sapling we plant today is a shield against climate change tomorrow. ”

Thiru M.K.STALIN
Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu



“ Tamil Nadu is at the forefront in increasing forest cover, working steadily towards achieving the national target of 33% green area. ”

Thiru R.S. RAJAKANNAPPAN
Honourable Minister for Forests and Khadi, Tamil Nadu



“ Every heritage tree represents decades of ecological intelligence and resilience. Conserving them is both a scientific responsibility and a commitment to sustainable stewardship. ”

Tmt. SUPRIYA SAHU, I.A.S.
Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Environment,
Climate Change & Forest Department, Tamil Nadu



“ Heritage trees are living witnesses to our history and guardians of our ecological future. Protecting them is not an option — it is our solemn duty. ”

Thiru. **SRINIVAS R. REDDY**, I.F.S.
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Head of Forest Force, Tamil Nadu



“ Heritage trees anchor ecosystems, regulate microclimates, and support complex biodiversity. Safeguarding them is essential to environmental resilience. ”

Thiru. **I. ANWARDEEN**, I.F.S.
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Chief Mission Director (Green Tamil Nadu Mission)



“ Heritage trees remind us that nature and cities must grow together. Protecting them sustains biodiversity, strengthens climate resilience, and preserves the ecological character of our landscapes. ”

Thiru. **S.N. THEJASVI**, IFS
Conservator of Forests, Chennai Circle



“ Heritage trees stand quietly across generations, offering shade, shelter, and life to countless beings. Protecting them honors the enduring bond between people and nature. ”

Thiru. **V.A. SARAVANAN**, IFS
District Forest Officer, Chennai Division



Introduction

Heritage trees are living monuments that embody ecological continuity and cultural heritage. Rooted in landscapes that have witnessed centuries of social and environmental change, they stand today as enduring symbols of Chennai's natural and historical legacy. Many of these trees are more than a hundred years old, with several exceeding two centuries, representing irreplaceable components of the city's ecological balance, biodiversity, and identity.

In an increasingly urbanised environment, heritage trees perform critical ecological functions. They act as carbon sinks, moderate urban heat, stabilise soil, support pollinators and avifauna, buffer storm impacts, and contribute to groundwater recharge. Their expansive canopies and deep-rooted systems strengthen urban climate resilience. Beyond their ecological role, these trees are repositories of shared cultural heritage, often associated with temples, historic institutions, wetlands, and long-established neighbourhoods.

Elaeodendron glaucum

Location: Stella Mary's College



Ficus benghalensis

Location: Rostrevor Railway colony, Teynampet

Government Initiative for Heritage Tree Identification in Chennai

Recognising the ecological, climatic, and cultural significance of old-growth trees in urban landscapes, the Government of Tamil Nadu initiated a structured programme under the Green Tamil Nadu Mission (GTM) to identify and document Heritage Trees in Chennai.

Objectives of the Initiative

- To identify legacy trees of ecological, historical, and cultural significance.
- To scientifically validate their age and health status.
- To establish a formal process for assigning Heritage Tree status.
- To develop a replicable model for the State

Phase I: Preliminary Identification of 40 Trees

In the first stage of the initiative, the Chennai Forest Division undertook the identification of potential Heritage Trees, with field-level technical support provided by the Nizhal Trust. The selection process was guided by criteria such as exceptional girth, expansive canopy spread, apparent age, historical association, and landmark status within the urban landscape. During this phase, provisional species identification was carried out, girth at breast height (GBH) was measured, overall tree height was documented, and photographic records were captured for each specimen. Through this systematic field assessment, a total of 40 trees were identified as potential Heritage Tree candidates.

Phase II: Identification of 17 Additional Trees from Historic Institutions

Recognising that many legacy trees are located within long-established institutional campuses, the Green Tamil Nadu Mission initiated a second phase of identification focusing on historic institutions in Chennai. A list of schools over one hundred years old, educational institutions with long historical presence, religious establishments, and other public institutions of heritage significance was prepared.

Based on the responses received, 17 additional trees were identified and documented. With this, the total number of trees identified so far reached 57 (Phase I: 40 trees; Phase II: 17 trees). The identification process continues as more institutions respond.

Development of the Heritage Tree Framework

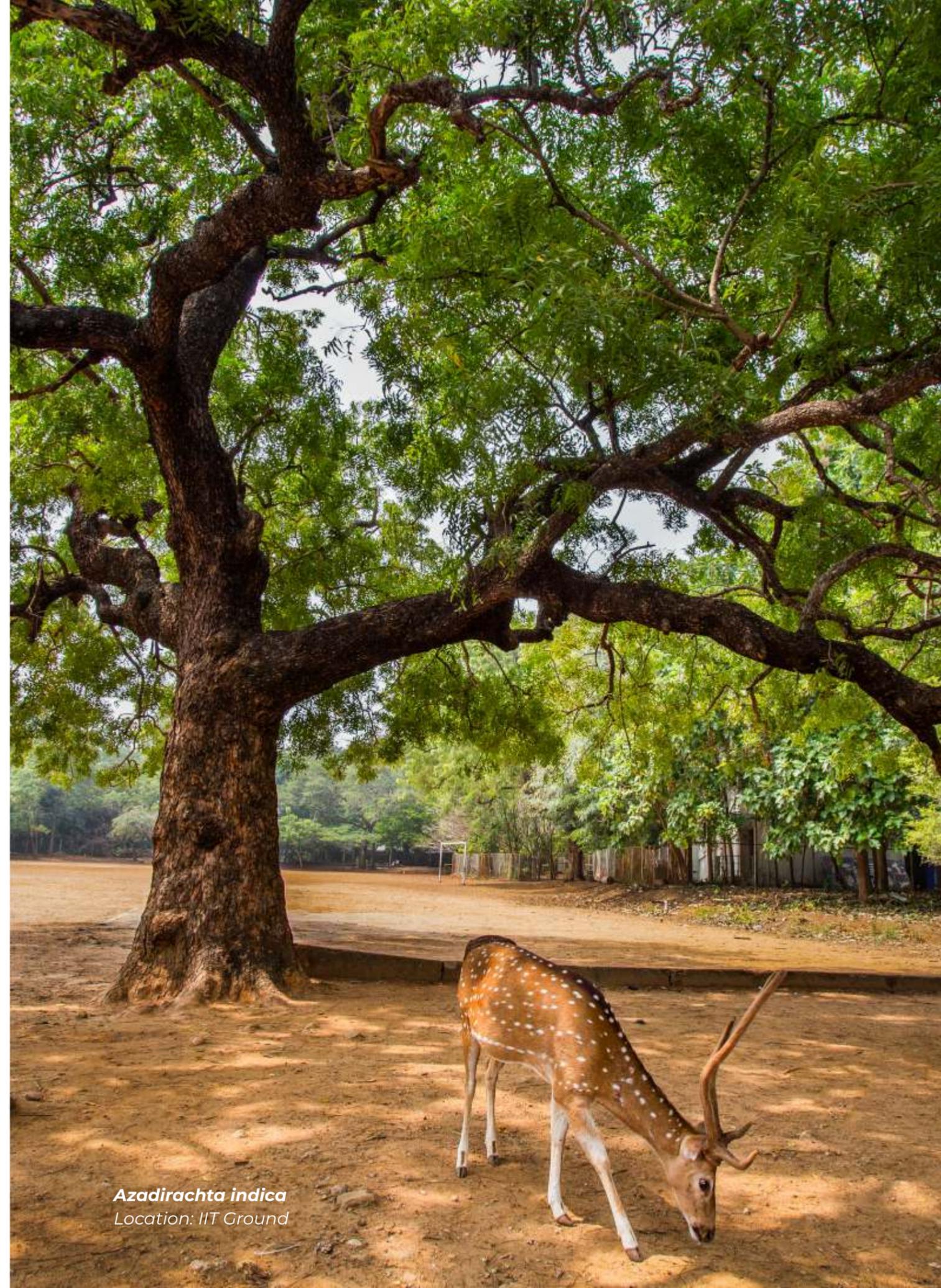
Prior to the scientific evaluation of the identified trees, the Green Tamil Nadu Mission developed a structured framework to guide the Heritage Tree initiative. The framework articulated the broader rationale for recognising and conserving such trees within urban landscapes, highlighting their contribution to climate resilience, carbon sequestration, biodiversity support, cultural landscape preservation, and mitigation of urban heat. It also outlined the benefits of recognition, including administrative acknowledgement, structured monitoring, risk-informed conservation planning, public awareness, and integration of heritage trees into urban planning processes. The framework further emphasised encouraging institutional participation through recognition, technical advisory support, inclusion in heritage mapping initiatives, and guidance on long-term maintenance and protection. The framework proposed by the Green Tamil Nadu Mission for identifying and assigning Heritage Tree status is presently under the active consideration of the State Green Committee.

Scientific Validation Phase: Engagement of IFGTB

After consolidating the trees identified under Phase I and Phase II, the Department compiled comprehensive information including species name, girth, height, and precise location details for each tree. The consolidated dataset was shared with the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), Coimbatore, a research institute under the Indian Council of Forest Research and Education (ICFRE), Government of India, and technical consultations were undertaken to determine appropriate protocols for scientific evaluation. On the request of the Green Tamil Nadu Mission (GTM), IFGTB agreed to co-partner in the scientific assessment of the identified trees. The institute undertook detailed scientific validation, including species authentication, morphometric verification, age estimation, structural health assessment, and suitability grading, thereby ensuring scientific rigor and credibility in the evaluation of potential Heritage Trees.

Stage I: Field Verification and Morphometric Assessment

In the first stage of the scientific assessment, a team of scientists from the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), Coimbatore, headed by Dr. Bhuvaneshwaran C., carried out field inspections of each identified tree. The Chennai Forest Division team also assisted in the field verification and documentation process.



Azadirachta indica
Location: IIT Ground

During these inspections, species identity was authenticated and morphometric parameters such as girth at breast height (1.37 m), total height, and crown architecture were recorded. Visible structural defects and anomalies were documented, and photographic records were captured for reference and analysis.

Stage II: Age Estimation

Age estimation of the identified trees was undertaken by the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), Coimbatore, using a combination of girth-based growth modelling and increment core sampling. Species-specific growth rates available in scientific literature were used to estimate probable age ranges and to classify the trees into appropriate ecological age classes. For selected trees, increment borers were used to extract core samples for detailed analysis. The samples were examined to distinguish earlywood and latewood growth rings, enabling more precise estimation of tree age. Following sampling, the boreholes were properly sealed to prevent infection and ensure the continued health of the trees.

Stage III: Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT)

Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) of the selected trees was undertaken through collaboration between the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), Coimbatore, and the Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST), Bengaluru. Field visits were made by Dr. C. Bhuvaneshwaran from IFGTB and Dr. B. N. Divakara from IWST for this purpose.

The procedure involved placing electrodes around the tree stem at breast height (approximately 1.37 m) and, where required, at other points along the stem to refine the measurements. Resistivity scanning was then carried out to generate tomographic images using specialised analytical software. The analysis enabled the assessment of internal wood condition, including identification of sapwood and heartwood differentiation, moisture variation, decay pockets, and overall structural integrity. These observations provided an additional scientific basis for evaluating the health and long-term stability of the identified trees

Health Assessment for Trees:

Integrating findings from Visual Tree Assessment (VTA), ERT interpretation, age estimation, structural integrity grading, and risk profiling. Based on the overall evaluation, trees were categorised as Suitable, Conditionally Suitable, or Not Suitable.

a) Visual Tree Assessment (VTA): Field inspection for observable indicators such as:

- Crown density and canopy dieback
- Bark condition and wounds
- Cavities and hollows
- Presence of fungal fruiting bodies
- Lean or structural instability
- Root plate disturbance
- Branch breakage or deadwood

b) Instrumental Assessment

Where required, Electrical Resistance Tomography (ERT) or similar diagnostic tools may be used to evaluate internal wood condition. ERT helps detect heartwood integrity, internal decay, moisture accumulation, and hollow formation.

Health Classification Criteria:

Health Category	Healthiness (%)	Interpretation
Excellent	81-100%	Tree structurally sound with no significant internal decay
Good	61-80%	Minor decay or moisture pockets; no immediate structural concern
Moderate	41-60%	Noticeable internal decay; periodic monitoring required
Poor	21-40%	Significant decay; structural weakness possible
Critical	0-20%	Extensive decay or hollowing; high risk requiring urgent management

Out of the 57 trees assessed, the health category evaluation was completed for 47 trees. Among these, 24 trees fall under the 'Excellent' health category, 12 trees under the 'Good' category, and 10 trees under the 'Moderate' category. One tree (*Prosopis cineraria*) located in Marundeeswarar Temple, under the jurisdiction of the HR & CE Department, has been classified under the 'Critical' tree health category.

For the trees classified under the 'Moderate' category, a set of management suggestions has already been provided in the field to the respective tree-owning institutions. The implementation of these measures is being carried out by the concerned institutions with technical assistance from the Chennai Forest Division. In the case of the tree categorized as 'Critical', samples have already been collected and are presently under examination by the Pathology Wing of the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB). Upon receipt of the diagnostic report and recommended remedial measures, appropriate treatment interventions will be undertaken as part of the tree health restoration process.

100 year old Trees of Chennai – At a Glance

Species Diversity

Species included: 27 Species
Indigenous: 42 Trees (21 Sps.)
Introduced: 15 Trees (6 Sps.)

Age Distribution

Aged >200 years: 24 Trees
Aged 100–200 years: 33 Trees
Oldest Heritage Tree Identified:
Adansonia digitata (239-292 Yrs) - Tree No:3

Girth Recorded

Girth >200 cm: 45 Trees
Girth <200 cm: 12 Trees
Tree recorded Largest Girth:
Adansonia digitata (1070 cm) - Tree No:2

Height Class

Height >20 m: 26 Trees
Height <20 m: 31 Trees
Tree recorded Largest Height:
Terminalia arjuna (41.6 m) - Tree No: 48

Major Families

Combretaceae
Meliaceae
Fabaceae
Malvaceae
Moraceae
Sapotaceae

Ecological Roles

Keystone fruiting species
Pollinator-supporting trees
High CO₂ Sequestering Trees
Avenue Trees
Temple-associated trees

01. *Bombax malabaricum*

Location: Chennai Trade Centre, Nandambakkam

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.516' N, 80°19.054' E

Rising prominently within the expansive grounds of the Chennai Trade Centre at Nandambakkam is *Bombax malabaricum* (இலவ்வு), the magnificent Red Silk Cotton Tree—an indigenous giant of the family *Bombacaceae*. With a girth of 260 cm and an impressive height of 32 m, this deciduous veteran is estimated to be between 103 and 126 years old (Saurabh Gupta & Rabikumar, 2010).

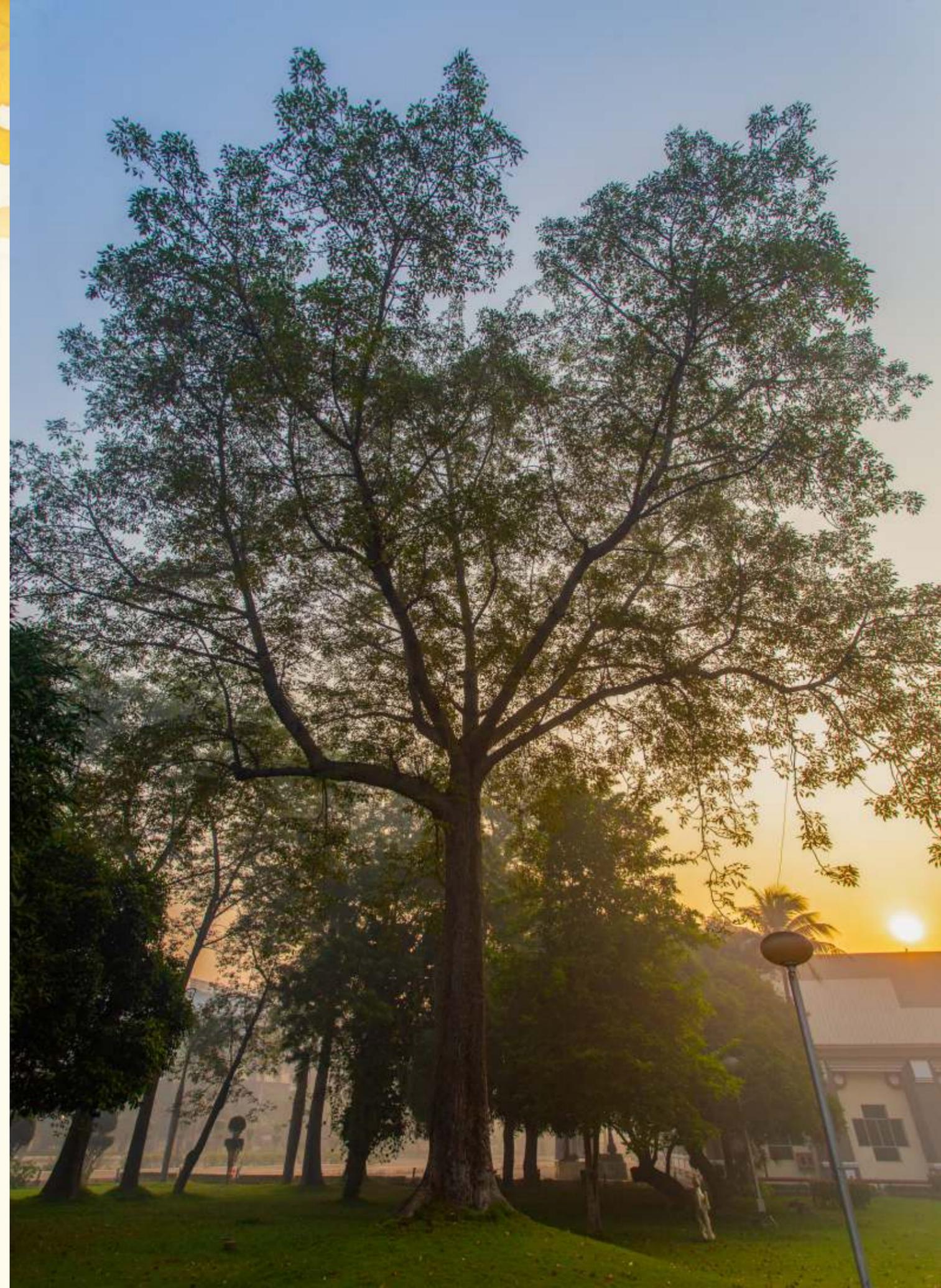
Between January and April, when the tree stands dramatically leafless, it bursts into bloom with large, waxy, a fiery spectacle against the dry-season sky. These nectar-rich blossoms attract a dynamic guild of pollinators: sunbirds such as the Purple Sunbird, flowerpeckers, drongos, mynas, the Oriental White-eye, and even fruit bats like *Pteropus giganteus*. By March to May, fruits mature and split open to release numerous black seeds enveloped in silky white fibres. Ecologically, the species serves as a keystone nectar source during lean seasons, supports birds, bats, bees, and butterflies, stabilises soil through its extensive root system, and contributes to habitat continuity. Economically, it is valued for timber, fibre production, and medicinal applications.

Its antiquity is echoed in Sangam literature,

“களிறுபுலம் உரிஞ்சிய கருங்கால் இலவம்” - அகநானூறு 309: 7

The dark-based *Ilavam* tree stands where elephants rub and scratch themselves to relieve their itch. The verse paints a vivid ecological image, the mighty elephant leaning against the thorned trunk reminding us that this species has long been woven into Tamil landscapes, sustaining both wildlife and poetic imagination across centuries.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



02. *Adansonia digitata*

Location: Rajiv Gandhi Government hospital, Central

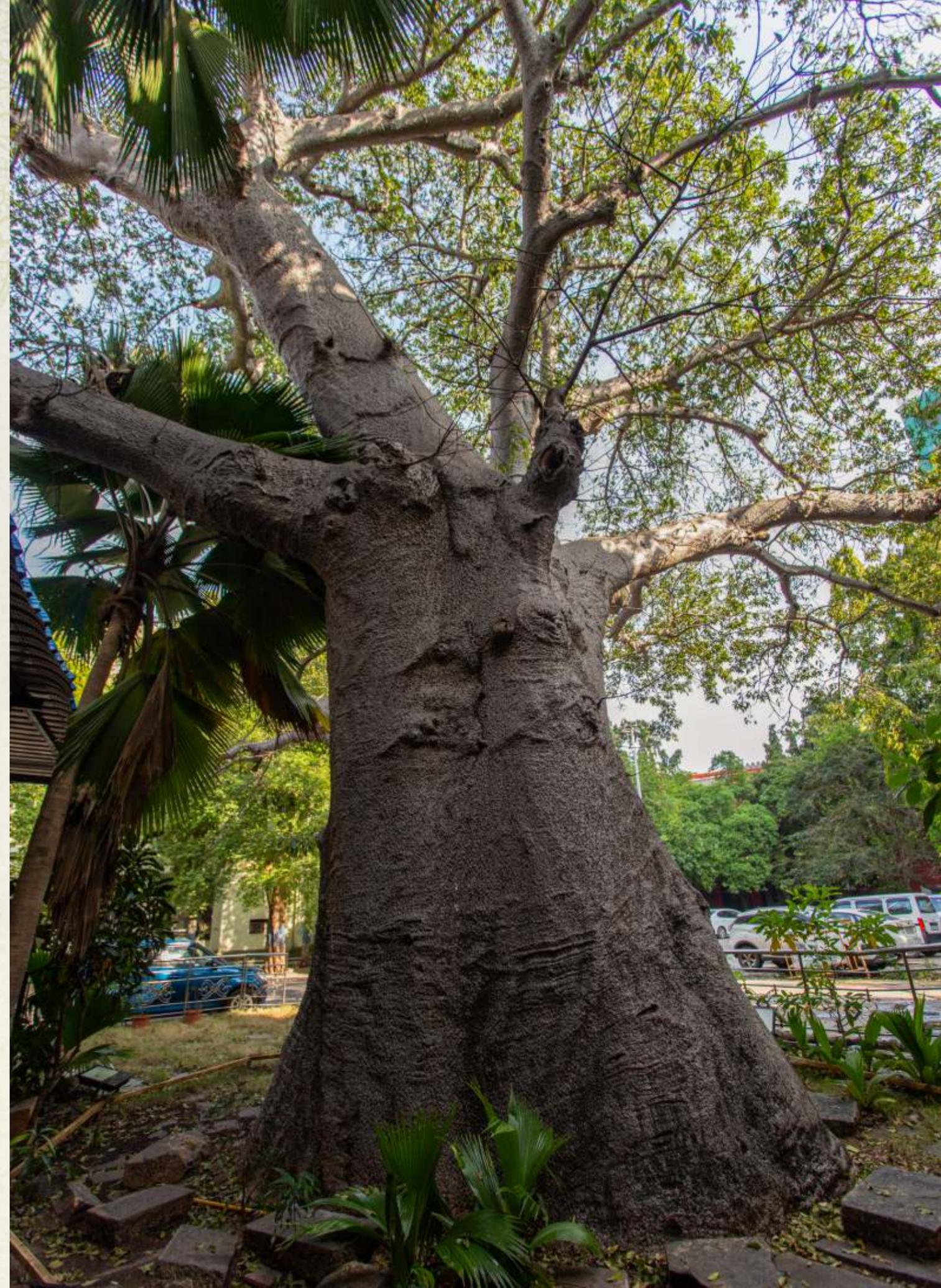
GPS Co-ordinates: 13°08.092' N, 80°27.902' E

At the historic heart of Chennai, within the campus of Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital in Park Town, stands an extraordinary living monument — *Adansonia digitata* (ஆனை புளியமரம்), the African Baobab. With a colossal girth of 1070 cm and a height of 16 m, this massive deciduous succulent is estimated to be more than 200 years old (Patrut et al., 2010), making it a silent witness to centuries of change. Native to Tropical Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and belonging to the family Malvaceae, the Baobab is famed for its swollen, water-laden trunk and solitary grandeur across savannas.

During May and June, it produces spectacular waxy white flowers, sweetly fragrant and opening at dusk, an adaptation to nocturnal pollination by fruit bats and moths. The fruits, maturing from August to December, are woody, velvety capsules, encasing nutrient-rich edible pulp with medicinal properties. Revered as the world's largest succulent, the Baobab stores vast quantities of water within its trunk, enabling survival during extreme droughts and sustaining surrounding fauna.

Ecologically, the tree functions as a life-support system in miniature: its hollowed cavities provide nesting sites for birds and bees, while its bark and canopy offer refuge to numerous organisms. Economically, it is a multipurpose species and its pulp consumed as food, its parts valued in traditional medicine. The hospital grounds that host this venerable giant trace their origins to 1664, when established by the British East India Company as India's first modern hospital, a setting where history and natural heritage converge beneath the enduring silhouette of the Baobab.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



03. *Adansonia digitata*

Location: Andra Mahila Sabha, Greenways road, Adayar

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.754' N, 80°26.124' E

Commanding awe within the serene campus of Andhra Mahila Sabha on Greenways Road, Adyar, stands the monumental *Adansonia digitata* (ஆனை புளியமரம்) — the legendary African Baobab. With an astonishing girth of 1065 cm and a height of 24 m, this living colossus is estimated between 239-292 years old (Patrut et al., 2010). Native to Tropical Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and belonging to the family Malvaceae, the Baobab is often described as the world's largest succulent tree.

A massive, long-lived deciduous species of the savanna, the Baobab is uniquely adapted to withstand prolonged drought. Between May and June, the tree produces large, waxy white flowers with a sweet fragrance that open at dusk, a nocturnal spectacle designed for pollination by fruit bats and moths. By August to December, fruits mature, containing nutrient-rich edible pulp. Ecologically, the tree functions as a living reservoir, storing vast quantities of water within its trunk, thereby sustaining itself and surrounding fauna during extreme dry spells. Hollowed cavities often become natural shelters and nesting spaces for birds, bees, and small animals.

Its presence at Andhra Mahila Sabha — founded by Padma Vibhushan Dr. (Smt) Durgabai Deshmukh and one of India's oldest charitable institutions — symbolises endurance, service, and resilience. Much like the institution it shades, this ancient Baobab stands as a guardian of time, culture, and community, silently witnessing generations while continuing to nourish life in manifold ways.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
70% Healthy



04. *Azadirachta indica*

Location: IIT Ground, IIT Madras

GPS Co-ordinates: 12°99.228' N, 80°23.253' E

Within the expansive grounds of IIT Madras stands a venerable guardian of indigenous heritage *Azadirachta indica*, known in Tamil as வேம்பு and widely revered as the Neem tree. Belonging to the family Meliaceae (Mahogany family), this drought-tolerant, semi-evergreen species has flourished for more than 200 years, with a girth of 316 cm and a height of 15 metres (Pandian and Parthasarathy, 2017). Neem is characterized by asymmetrical serrated leaflets. It produces flowers during March to May, pollinated mainly by bees and dipteran flies. The fruits set and ripen between May and July.

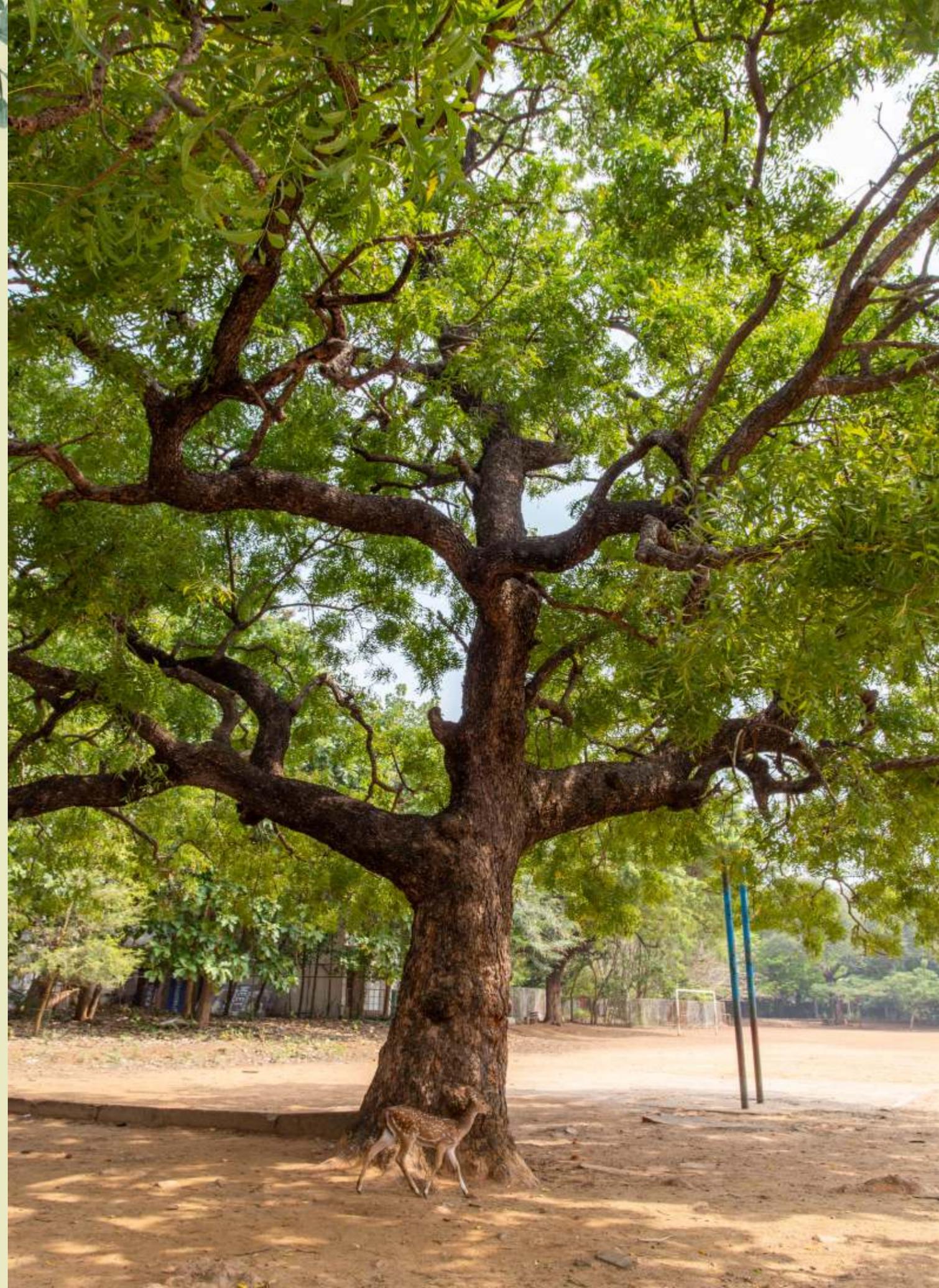
Renowned for its environmental services, Neem plays a crucial role in air purification by trapping dust particles and absorbing harmful gaseous pollutants. Its high carbon fixation efficiency often exceeding 14 μmol of CO_2 per m^2 per second makes it an exceptional contributor to carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation.

Economically valued for its tree-borne oil seeds, Neem has long supported traditional practices and sustainable livelihoods. Its cultural imprint extends deep into Tamil literary heritage, as reflected in,

“கோட்டினர் வேம்பின் ஓடு இலை மிடைந்த
படலைக் கண்ணி” - பெரும்பாணாற்றுப்படை: 59-60

alluding to the traditional practice of adorning household entrances with neem leaves. Situated within the verdant campus of the Indian Institute of Technology Madras—a premier educational institution in Chennai, this ancient neem stands not only as a botanical treasure but also as a living bridge between science, environment, and classical Tamil tradition.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



05. *Ficus benghalensis*

Location: Rostrevor Railway colony, Teynampet

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°05.865' N, 80°27.732' E

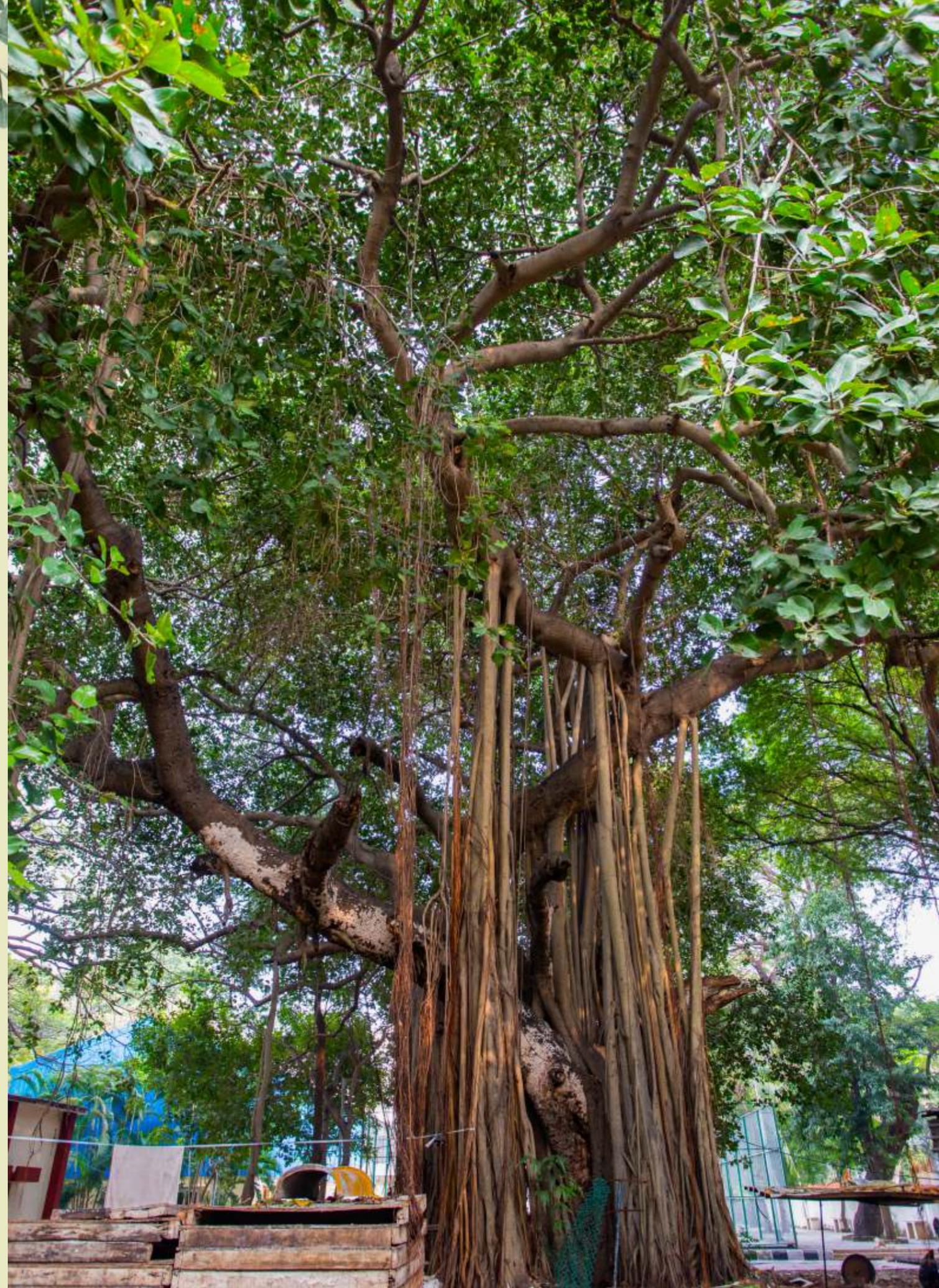
Dominating the landscape of Rostrevor Railway Colony in Teynampet, Ficus benghalensis, locally revered as ஆலமரம் and widely known as the Banyan, stands as a living monument of ecological strength. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Moraceae, this large deciduous tree presently measures 15 metres in height with an extraordinary girth of 500 cm and is estimated to be over 100 years old as per Patrut et al., 2023.

Flowering and fruiting occur throughout the year. The tiny unisexual flowers are concealed within a specialized fleshy structure known as a syconium or fig, which houses male flowers that produce pollen, female flowers that develop seeds and gall flowers used for wasp breeding. Wasps serve as the exclusive pollinators in this intricate mutualistic relationship.

Ecologically, Ficus benghalensis is regarded as a keystone species, supporting hundreds of birds and insects and playing a central role in biodiversity enrichment. Its high rate of photosynthesis enables substantial carbon sequestration, while its broad canopy traps particulate matter and aids in air purification. Economically and culturally, it is valued for medicinal applications and bark fibre. The sacred stature of the Banyan finds resonance in Sangam literature as,

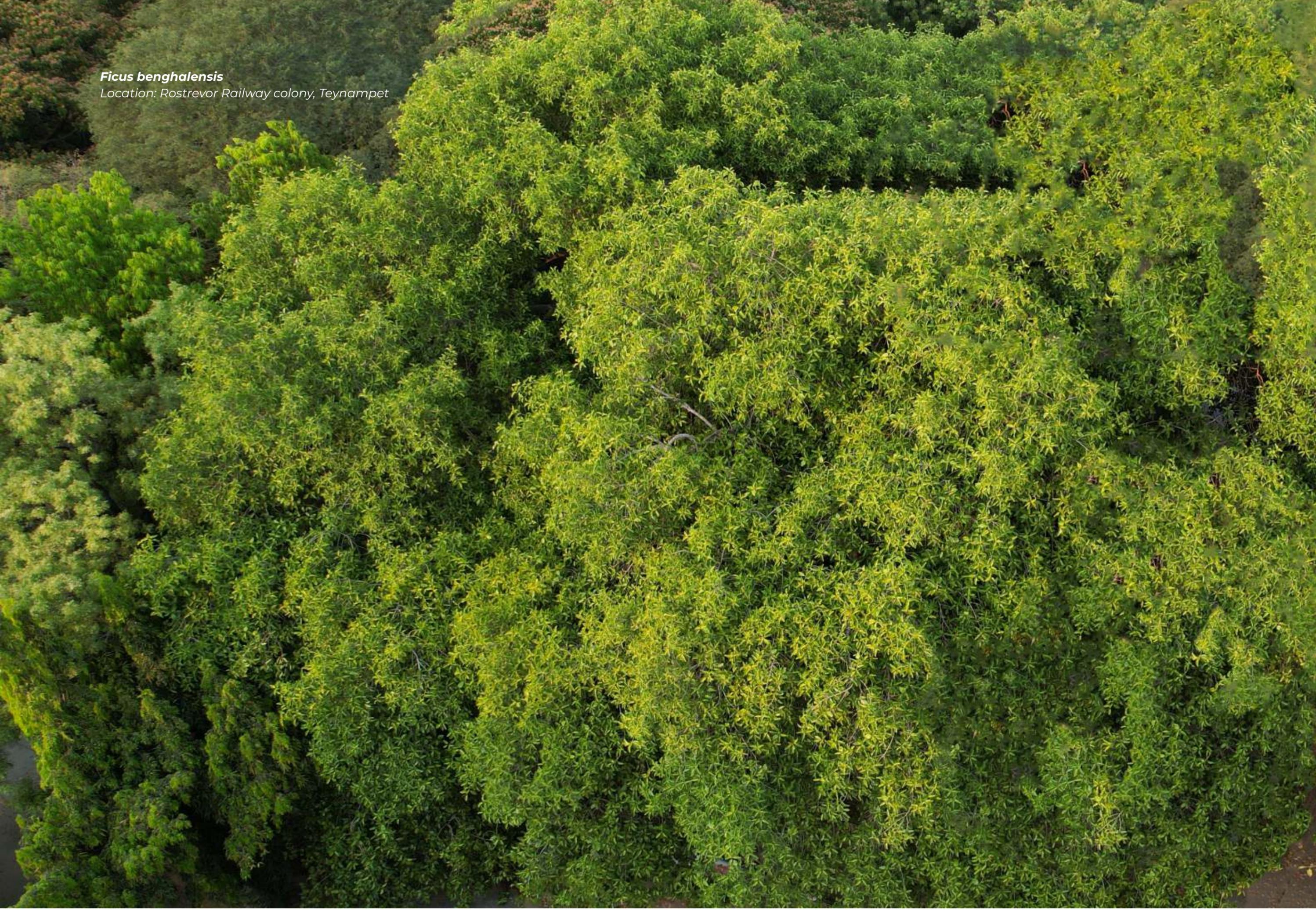
“எம்மூர் வாயில் ஒண்துறைத் தடைஇய
கடவுள் முதுமரத்து” - நற்றிணை 83

At the entrance of our town stands the ancient sacred tree, radiant and revered as the abode of divinity—a timeless symbol of protection and continuity.



Ficus benghalensis

Location: Rostrevor Railway colony, Teynampet



06. *Azadirachta indica*

Location: Kasthuribai Government Hospital, Triplicane

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°05.815' N, 80°27.895' E

Within the historic precincts of Government Kasturba Hospital for Women, Triplicane, stands an enduring native sentinel *Azadirachta indica*, revered in Tamil as வேம்பு and widely known as the Neem. Belonging to the family Meliaceae (Mahogany family), this semi-evergreen, drought-tolerant tree has flourished between 126-155 years, attaining a girth of 361 cm and a height of 15 metres (Pandian and Parthasarathy, 2017). Neem is characterized by asymmetrical serrated leaflets. It produces flowers during March to May, pollinated mainly by bees and dipteran flies. The fruits set and ripen between May and July.

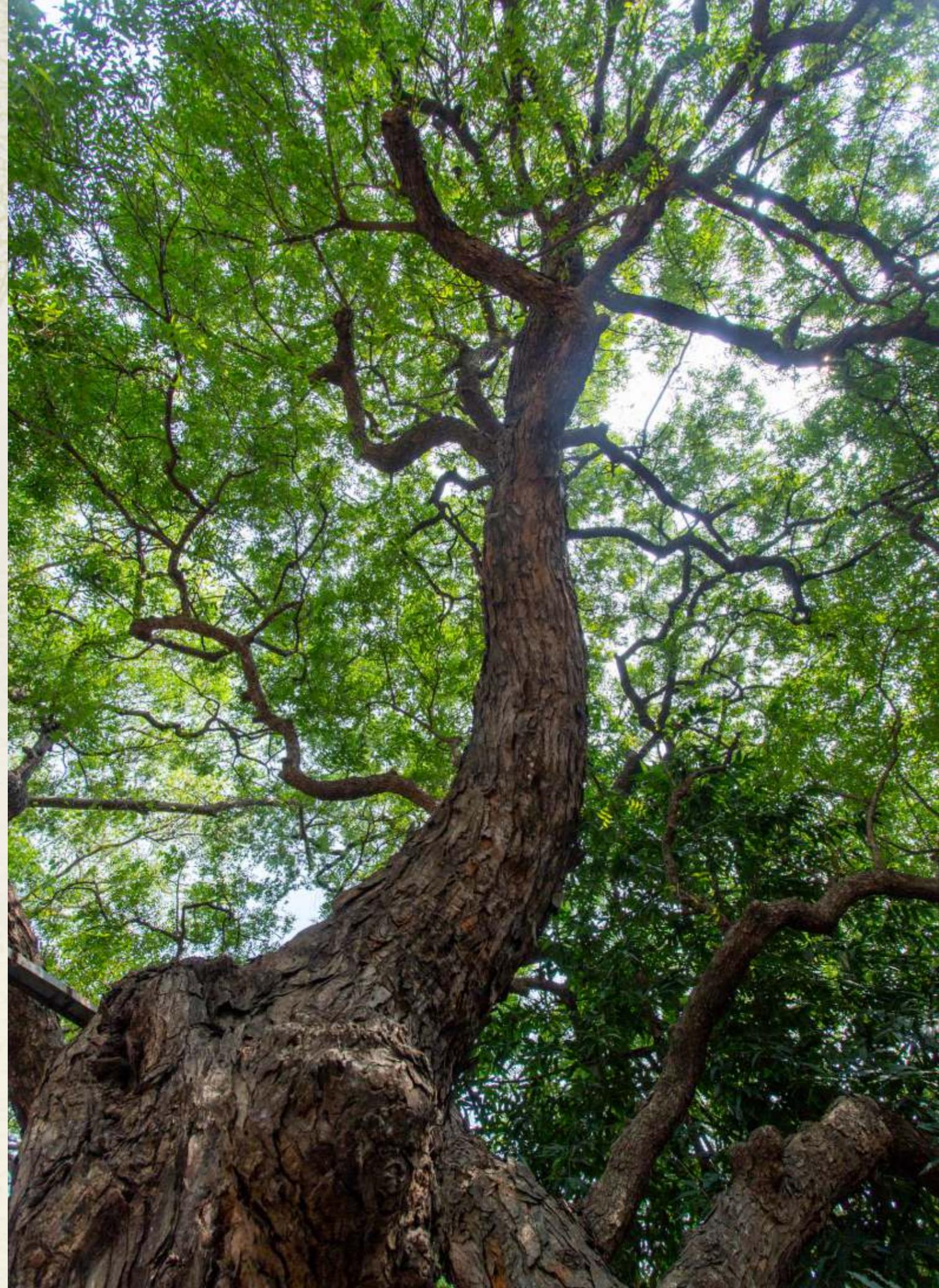
Renowned for its environmental services, Neem is highly effective in air purification, trapping dust particles and absorbing harmful gaseous pollutants. Its remarkable carbon fixation efficiency—often exceeding 14 μmol of CO_2 per m^2 per second—makes it a powerful contributor to climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration.

Economically valued for its tree-borne oil seeds, the Neem has long supported traditional medicinal and agricultural practices. Its cultural presence resonates deeply in Tamil heritage, as celebrated in

"தெய்வம் சேர்ந்த பராரை வேம்பில்" - அகநானூறு 309

referring to the neem tree that stands on the raised mound where the deity resides. Situated on Victoria Hostel Road near Chepauk Cricket Stadium, Government Kasturba Hospital—one of the country's largest maternity institutions—serves generations of families, and within its grounds this ancient Neem stands as a living symbol of protection, healing, and continuity.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
70% Healthy



07. *Adansonia digitata*

Location: AC Tech Campus, Guindy

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°00.776' N, 80°23.859' E

Rising with an almost mythic presence within the AC Tech Campus, Guindy, the venerable *Adansonia digitata* (Tamil: ஆனை புளியமரம்; English: African Baobab) stands as a living relic of Tropical Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Belonging to the family Malvaceae, this massive, long-lived, deciduous succulent often solitary in habit is estimated to be over 100 years old (Patrut et al., 2010). With a girth of 185 cm and a height of 12.8 m, the tree commands attention not merely by size but by form: a swollen, water-laden trunk and stark, sculptural branches that silhouette dramatically against the sky.

From May to June, the baobab unveils large, waxy white flowers and a sweet fragrance, opening at dusk in a remarkable nocturnal display. Pollinated primarily by fruit bats and moths, these blossoms exemplify co-evolution with night-active fauna. By August through December, the tree produces fruits. Ecologically, celebrated as the world's largest succulent, capable of storing vast quantities of water within its trunk—an adaptation that sustains the tree and surrounding fauna during prolonged droughts. Hollowed trunks often serve as nesting sites for birds and bees and provide shelter to various animals, transforming the tree into a microhabitat of resilience and survival. Economically, it is a multipurpose species valued for its edible pulp and wide-ranging medicinal applications.

Its presence within the historic Alagappa College of Technology campus established in 1944 under the University of Madras and later integrated with Anna University in 1978 adds an intellectual dimension to its ecological grandeur. Amid laboratories and lecture halls, the ancient baobab endures as a botanical monument bridging continents, centuries, and disciplines quietly embodying endurance, adaptation, and the global exchange of natural heritage.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



08. *Azadirachta indica*

Location: St. George Anglo Indian School, EVR Road, Shenoy Nagar

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°07.832' N, 80°22.503' E

Rooted firmly within the campus of St. George's Anglo-Indian Higher Secondary School stands a venerable specimen of *Azadirachta indica*, locally known as வேம்பு and widely called Neem. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Meliaceae, this drought tolerant, semi-evergreen tree grows up to 15 metres tall with a rounded crown and a girth of 383 cm, and is estimated to be over 200 years old as per Pandian and Parthasarathy, 2017. Neem is characterized by asymmetrical serrated leaflets. It produces flowers during March to May, pollinated mainly by bees and dipteran flies. The fruits set and ripen between May and July.

Ecologically, Neem is highly valued for air purification, effectively trapping dust and absorbing harmful gaseous pollutants, and for its strong carbon fixation efficiency, often exceeding 14 μmol of CO_2 per m^2 per second, making it an excellent species for climate change mitigation.

Economically, *Azadirachta indica* is important for its tree borne oil seeds and numerous traditional applications. The historic institution it graces, founded in 1715 as the Military Male Orphan Asylum and among the oldest schools in India, reflects centuries of educational heritage. The cultural significance of the Neem is echoed in Sangam literature in,

“வேம்பின் ஒண்பழம் முணைஇ இருப்பதை” - நற்றிணை 279

The line describes the shining fruit of a neem tree hanging at the tip of its branch, creating a vivid natural imagery.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
90% Healthy



09. *Mimusops elengi*

Location: Loyola college

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°06.298' N, 80°23.446' E

Gracefully rising within the verdant campus of Loyola College, Chennai stands *Mimusops elengi*, locally known as மகிழும் and commonly called the Bulletwood Tree. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Sapotaceae, this medium-sized evergreen tree reaches a recorded height of 25.6 metres with a girth of 380 cm and is estimated to be over 200 years old as per Tamilselvan et al., 2021.

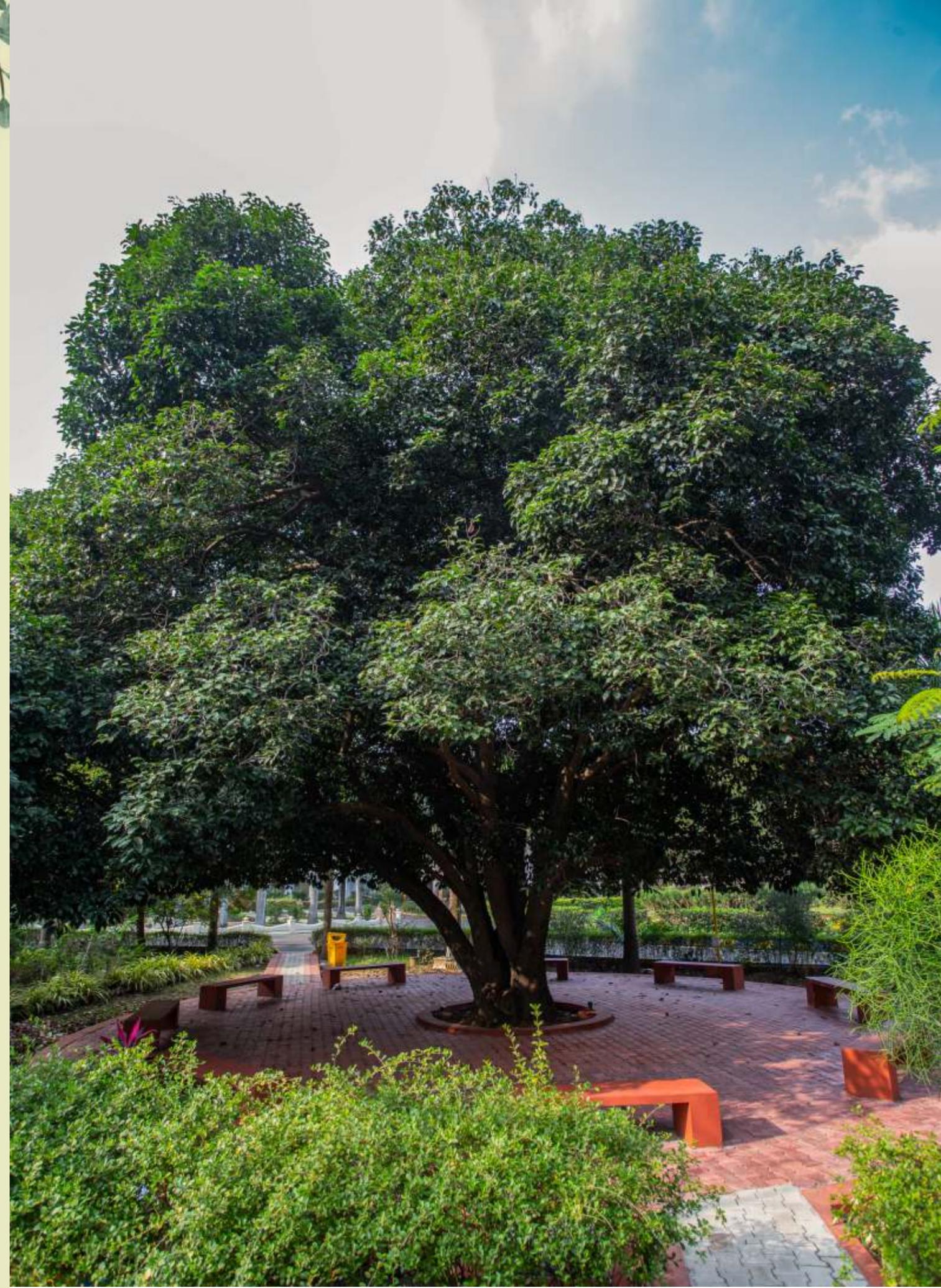
Flowering extends from March to August, when small, star-shaped pale yellow or white blossoms and attracts Bees, wasps, birds, butterflies and moths serve as its major pollinators. Fruiting occurs between May and October, producing small berry-like fruits containing a single seed.

Ecologically, *Mimusops elengi* supports wildlife by providing edible yellow berries to parrots, crows, monkeys, squirrels and bats, while its dense evergreen canopy offers enduring shade and ornamental value in gardens and avenues. Economically, it is valued as a multipurpose tree for timber and in the scent industry. The cultural resonance of the tree is reflected in Sangam literature as,

“பசும்பிடி வகுளம் பல்இணர்க் காயா” - குறிஞ்சிப்பாட்டு 70

Like the lush green Vakula tree (Magizham) laden with many fruits, the heart too bears an intense and radiant fullness — a poetic image linking abundance in nature with the depth of emotion.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
90% Healthy



10. *Swietenia mahagoni*

Location: Ramanujam computing centre, Anna university, Guindy

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.055' N, 80°23.721' E

The mature *Swietenia mahagoni* (Tamil: மகாகனி; English: Small-leaved Mahogany), belonging to the family Meliaceae and native to the Caribbean, is located at the Ramanujan Computing Centre within Anna University, Guindy. With a girth of 360 cm and height 32 m, the tree is estimated to be between 118–144 years old, based on comparative growth data from the historic specimen at St. Matthias Church, Vepery. During April to July, it produces small, fragrant, greenish-yellow flowers, attracting thrips, bees, and moths. Fruiting occurs from July to September, forming woody capsules that split upward from the base to release numerous flat, winged seeds.

Ecologically, *Swietenia mahagoni* contributes significantly to carbon sequestration and air quality improvement, as large, long-lived trees absorb substantial amounts of atmospheric CO₂ and help mitigate warming. Owing to its tall canopy and straight growth form, it is widely used in agroforestry systems as a shade tree for crops such as coffee and cocoa, and to provide shelter for younger plantation trees. Economically, the species is highly valued for its premium-quality timber, known for durability, workability, and aesthetic grain.

The tree's presence at the Ramanujan Computing Centre adds symbolic depth to its ecological stature. The computing centre was established in 1963 at the College of Engineering, Guindy campus and later renamed in honour of the mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan during his birth centenary celebrations. The enduring mahogany tree standing within this technologically vibrant campus represents a harmonious coexistence of natural heritage and scientific progress.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



11. *Prosopis cineraria*

Location: Marundeswarar Temple, Thiruvanimiyur

GPS Co-ordinates: 12°98.524' N, 80°26.000' E

Within the sacred precincts of Marundeeswarar Temple, where temple towers rise above the coastal breeze of Thiruvanimiyur, stands a venerable specimen of *Prosopis cineraria* (வண்ணி) - the Indian Mesquite of the Fabaceae (Mimosoid) group. With a girth of 130 cm and a height of 9.6 m, this indigenous evergreen is estimated to be more than 100 years old (Tamilselvan et al., 2021).

It has small bipinnate leaves that reduce water loss, thorny branches for protection, and a twisted, irregular trunk form commonly seen in desert landscapes. Indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, flowers during March to May followed by fruiting in May to July. Ecologically, the species is widely valued for avenue and ornamental planting due to its dense, drooping canopy that provides generous shade. Its deep root system stabilizes soil along riverbanks and moist tracts, while economically it serves as a source of high-protein livestock fodder.

The Vanni tree also finds mention in Sangam devotional literature. In the verse

“வம்பார் கொன்றை வண்ணி மத்தம் மலர்தூவி”

- இரண்டாம் திருமுறை: 2

poetically describes a sacred landscape where fragrant tubers and Vanni trees bloom, stands the temple of the Lord who graciously blesses devotees. Around it, birds call amidst blossoming Mullai flowers, and bees hum through lush groves.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
20% Healthy



12. *Hura crepitans*

Location: Roja Muthiah Research Library, Taramani

GPS Co-ordinates: 12°99.843' N, 80°24.618' E

Towering to an extraordinary 41 m within the scholarly precincts of the Roja Muthiah Research Library, Taramani, *Hura crepitans* (Tamil: காட்டு-ஆமணக்கு, English: Dynamite Tree / Sand Box Tree) stands as one of the most dramatic presences in the landscape. With a girth of 322 cm and a predicted age ranging between 189–232 years (Tamilselvan et al., 2021), this fast-growing deciduous giant from Tropical America commands attention through its smooth grey trunk armored with sharp conical spines.

Flowering starts from June to August, pollinated by bats and insects, and produces fruits between September and November. As they dry, the fruits explode with remarkable force, dispersing seeds up to 100 meters at velocities nearing 70 m/s (about 250 km/h), earning the name “Dynamite Tree.” Ecologically, it functions as a biodiversity anchor, serving as a perch for birds and a food source for fruit bats and marmosets that consume its gum. Its seeds hold ethnomedicinal value and potential as biofuel resources.

Its location further enriches its narrative. The Roja Muthiah Research Library (est. 1994), a distinguished institution preserving over 500,000 artefacts and millions of digitized pages documenting Tamil civilization. Just as the library safeguards literary memory, this centuries-old tree embodies botanical history—an explosive yet enduring symbol of nature's power standing amidst the archives of culture.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
90% Healthy





Mimusops elengi
Location: Loyola College

13. *Hardwickia binata*

Location: Guindy National Park

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°00.230' N, 80°22.815' E

Within the dry woodland mosaic of Guindy National Park, stands a dignified specimen of *Hardwickia binata* (Tamil: ஆச்சா, English: Indian Blackwood), an indigenous member of the Leguminosae family. With a girth of 231 cm and a height of 15 m, this slow-growing deciduous tree is estimated to be between 104–127 years old (Devaranavadgi et al., 2013). The leaves are alternate, nearly kidney-shaped or reminiscent of butterfly wings. During August to September, it produces flowers, primarily pollinated by bees. The fruits, developing from September to February, are distinctive—winged, leathery pods enclosing a single seed.

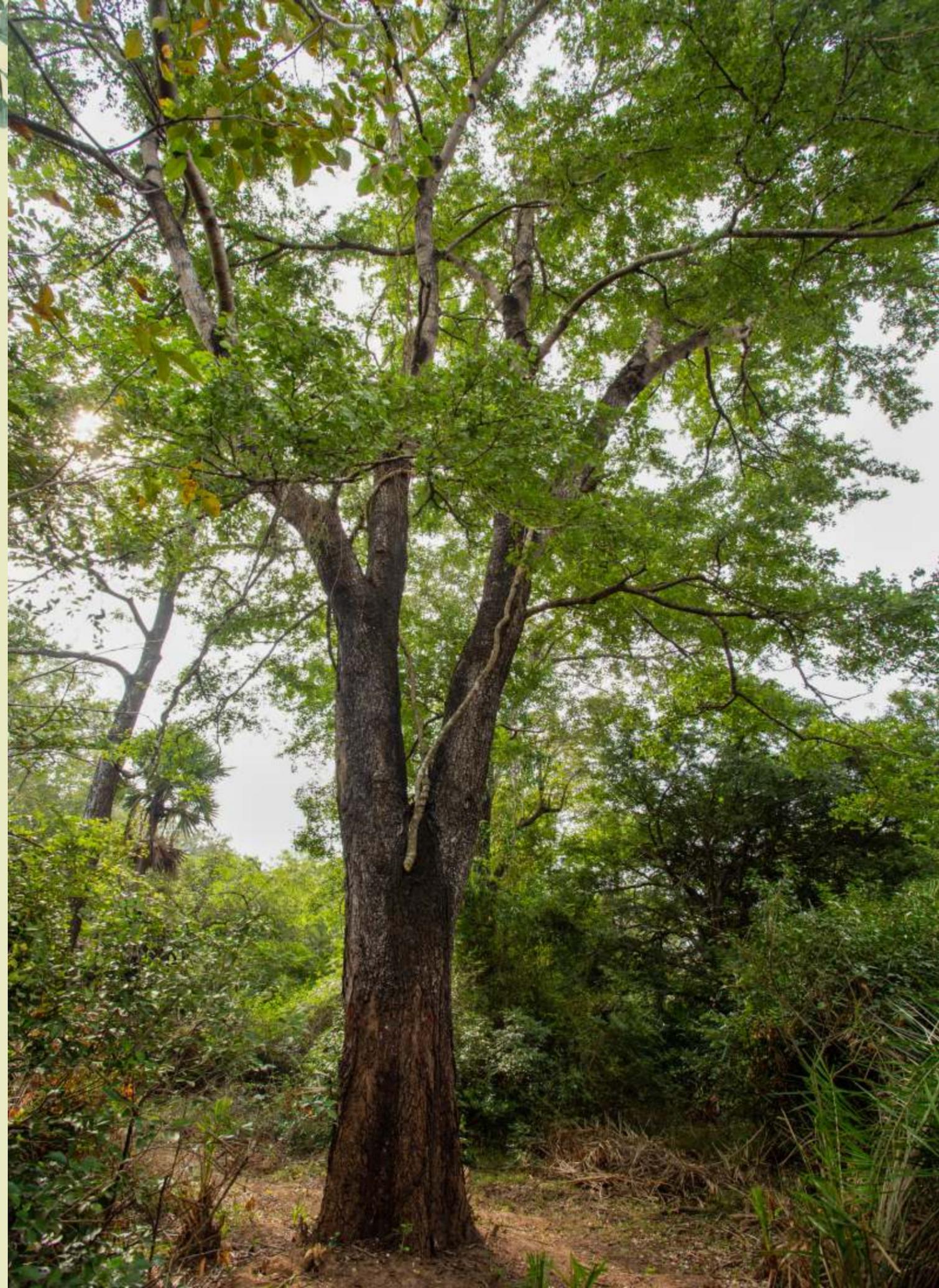
Ecologically, *Hardwickia binata* is a keystone species of dry landscapes. Additionally, the species is integrated into silvipasture systems, where its foliage serves as nutritious top feed for livestock during harsh summer droughts and lean winter months. Economically, Indian Blackwood is prized for its durable timber, widely used in construction and agricultural implements. Guindy National Park, one of the very few national parks situated within a metropolitan city, spans 2.70 km² and traces its origins to a garden carved out of the Guindy forest in the 1670s. The cultural resonance of Anjan echoes in Sangam literature.

“பிடிபசி களைஇய பெருங்கை வேழம்

மென்சினையா அம் பொளிக்கும்” - குறுந்தொகை - 37: 2-3

These lines describe a mighty elephant breaking the tender branches of a forest tree to feed and even splitting its bark with its tusks to relieve hunger, offering it to the female elephant. The verse reflects the intimate relationship between wildlife and dry-land tree species, symbolizing strength, sustenance, and ecological interdependence.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
70% Healthy



14. *Elaeodendron glaucum*

Location: Stella Mary's College

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°04.587' N, 80°25.378' E

*Within the historic campus of Stella Maris College, where generations of young minds have blossomed since 1947 under the gentle stewardship of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, rises the ancient presence of *Elaeodendron glaucum* (கருவலி), the Ceylon Tea Tree. With a commanding girth of 600 cm and a height of 17 meters, this indigenous evergreen sentinel is believed to have stood for more than 200 years (Tamilselvan et al., 2021). Belonging to the family Celastraceae, its form is one of quiet dignity.*

*Between February and June, delicate whitish flowers, inviting the devoted visits of honey bees (*Apis cerana*) and wandering flies. As the seasons turn from May to November, small ovoid fruits, ripen from tender green to yellowish-green, each enclosing a single seed.*

Yet beyond its beauty lies purpose woven into resilience. This venerable tree serves as a steadfast windbreak, tempering harsh gusts and guarding the grounds with unwavering patience. Its wood has long been valued for timber and as reliable fuelwood, sustaining both structure and survival. In a campus devoted to uplifting the marginalized and nurturing intellect within a Christian ethos, this centuries-old Ceylon Tea Tree stands not merely as vegetation, but as a living emblem of endurance, service, and shelter a green guardian whose roots grip both soil and history with equal strength.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



15. *Guaiacum officinale*

Location: Kalaignar Centenary park

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°05.013' N, 80°25.322' E

In the living green gallery of Kalaignar Centenary Park, Gopalapuram, Chennai, stands a distinguished representative of resilience and endurance i.e. the Tree of Life, *Guaiacum officinale* (Tamil: சீமை வைரமரம்), a species belonging to the family Zygophyllaceae and native to Tropical America. This particular tree, measuring 130 cm in girth and rising to a height of 10 metres, is estimated to be between 148 and 181 years old (Francis, 1993).

From March to October, the tree adorns itself with small but striking bluish-purple flowers. These attract a vibrant array of pollinators, particularly honey bees (*Apis* spp.) and butterflies, sustaining ecological interactions within the park. By May, hardy, heart-shaped fruits begin to appear, each containing two seeds, with fruiting continuing through much of the year. Exceptionally tolerant of drought, saline winds, and shallow rocky soils, this species thrives where many others cannot, stabilizing soils and supporting reforestation in arid and degraded coastal landscapes.

Beyond its ecological grace, the Tree of Life carries immense economic significance. It yields resin and produces the heaviest wood in the world, prized for its strength and durability, traditionally used in crafting ship bearings and mallet heads. Within the six-acre Kalaignar Centenary Park established in 2024 by the Horticulture Department of Tamil Nadu to commemorate the centenary of Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi—this tree stands not merely as a botanical specimen, but as a living chronicle of endurance, adaptation, and heritage, embodying the harmony between nature, history, and human appreciation.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



16. *Prosopis cineraria*

Location: Soundareswarar Temple, Saidapet

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°02.153' N, 80°22.147' E

Standing gracefully within the sacred precincts of Soundareswarar Temple, Saidapet, this venerable Indian Mesquite - வன்னி மரம் in Tamil (*Prosopis cineraria*), belonging to the Fabaceae (Mimosoid) family, is estimated between 151-184 years old, with a height of 25 m and girth of 255 cm (Tamilselvan et al., 2021). Indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, flowers during March to May followed by fruiting in May to July.

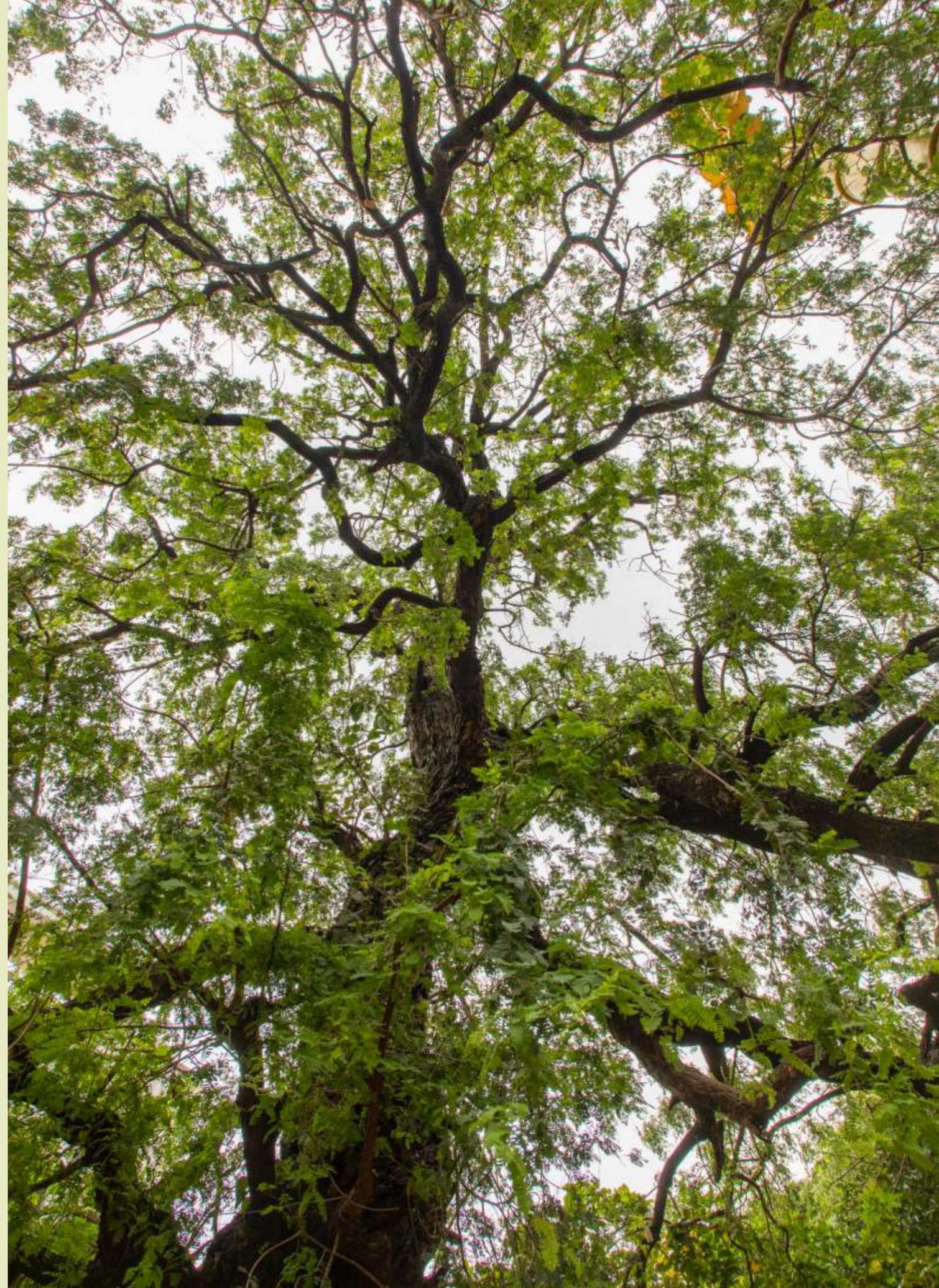
Ecologically, the tree is both resilient and generous. Its extensive root system stabilizes soil and supports fragile landscapes, particularly along riverbanks and semi-arid regions. The dense, drooping canopy offers cooling shade, making it a valued species for avenue planting and urban landscapes. The flowers attract birds and butterflies, and it serves as a larval host plant for the Common Grass Yellow butterfly. Economically, its protein-rich pods are an important livestock fodder, sustaining rural livelihoods across dry regions.

The presence of this heritage tree within the historic temple landscape enhances its cultural aura. The temple, believed to have been established in the 12th century, is celebrated in sacred Tamil hymns. The Vanni tree also finds mention in Sangam devotional literature.

“மன்னர் மறைத்த தாழி
வன்னி மன்றத்து விளங்கிய காடே” - பதிற்றுப்பத்து 44

The verse refers to a forest clearing with a Vanni grove, associated with kings and assemblies. It suggests that the Vanni tree grove served as a place of gathering and significance.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
90% Healthy



17. *Ficus amplissima*

Location: Alli Pond, Gandhi Mandapam

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°00.632' N, 80°23.721' E

At the serene edge of Alli Pond near Gandhi Mandapam, a monumental *Ficus amplissima* stands in timeless grace, its vast girth of 483 cm and height of 17 metres marking it as a living relic estimated between 186-227 years old (Patrut et al., 2023). Known in Tamil as கல் ஆலமரம் and commonly called the Indian Bat Fig, this indigenous member of the Moraceae family is emblematic of riparian landscapes across the Indian subcontinent.

A botanical wonder, this species flowers November to January, though its tiny unisexual blooms remain hidden within a unique urn-shaped structure called a syconium, which appears as clustered growths directly on the trunk and large branches. This extraordinary arrangement is sustained by an exclusive ecological partnership with the agaonid wasp, *Ceratosolen fusciceps*, its specific pollinator. Fruiting occurs in December to February. Providing essential habitat for diverse wildlife, including birds, bats, and insects. It supports biodiversity, aids in reforestation, and offers medicinal, fodder, and fuel resources for rural communities.

Its presence at Alli Pond - Gandhi Mandapam, enhances the ecological richness and aesthetic value of the location. The tree also finds mention in Sangam devotional literature.

“கல்லால் நிழல் கலந்து கானல் மேய்ந்த ...” - அகநானூறு 86

describes animals grazing in an open landscape where the wide shade of the tree spreads across the land. Its cool shade mingles with the surrounding terrain, offering relief from the heat of the dry region. The line highlights how large trees provide shelter and comfort to living beings in nature.





Ficus benghalensis

Location: Thamarai Kulam, Pallikaranai

18. *Ficus racemosa*

Location: Department of Industrial Engineering, Anna University

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°00.982' N, 80°23.410' E

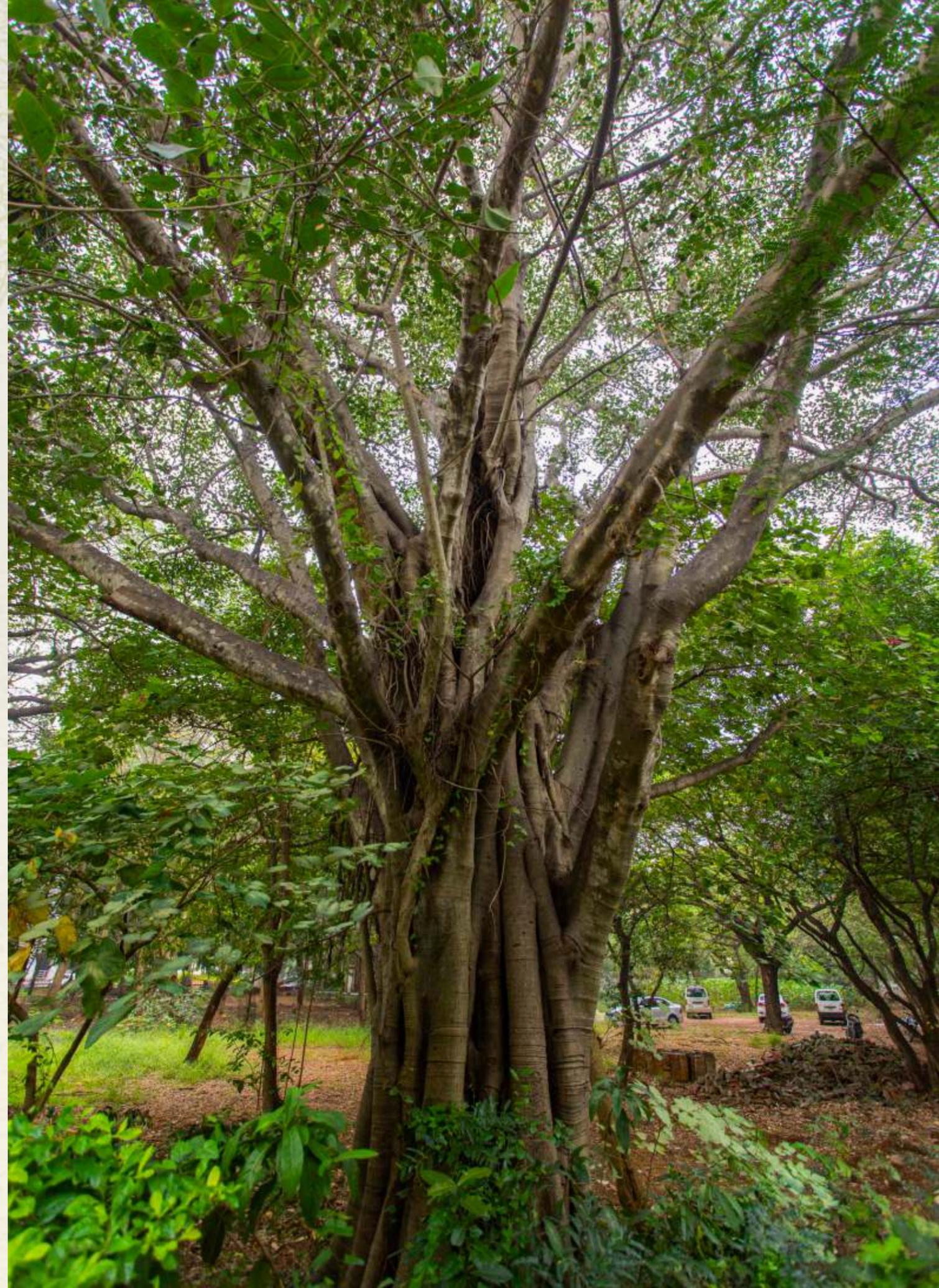
At the heart of the Department of Industrial Engineering, Anna University, rises a towering sentinel of time *Ficus racemosa*, revered in Tamil as அத்தி and known in English as the Cluster Fig. Indigenous to the Indian subcontinent and belonging to the family Moraceae, this magnificent deciduous tree commands attention with a girth of 401 cm and an impressive height of 28 metres. Scientific assessment (Patrut et al., 2023) places its age between 155 and 189 years, marking it as a silent witness to generations of scholarship.

A botanical wonder, this species flowers throughout the year, though its tiny unisexual blooms remain hidden within a unique urn-shaped structure called a syconium, which appears as clustered growths directly on the trunk and large branches. This extraordinary arrangement is sustained by an exclusive ecological partnership with the agaonid wasp, *Ceratosolen fusciceps*, its specific pollinator. Fruiting continues year-round, reinforcing the tree's vital ecological role.

As a keystone species, *Ficus racemosa* sustains biodiversity by providing continuous nourishment to at least seven bird species and three bat (chiropteran) species, especially during seasons when other food sources are scarce. Its tolerance to waterlogging allows it to thrive near water bodies, where it functions as a natural buffer against soil erosion and supports soil conservation and water protection. Immortalized in Sangam literature in

“அத்தி நெடுவேர் அணங்குடைச் சிறுகிளை” - அகநானூறு: 136

the tree's deep roots and delicate branches are poetically invoked as metaphors of love, affirming its enduring place in Tamil heritage.



19. *Sterculia foetida*

Location: Krishnamurthy Foundation Greenways road

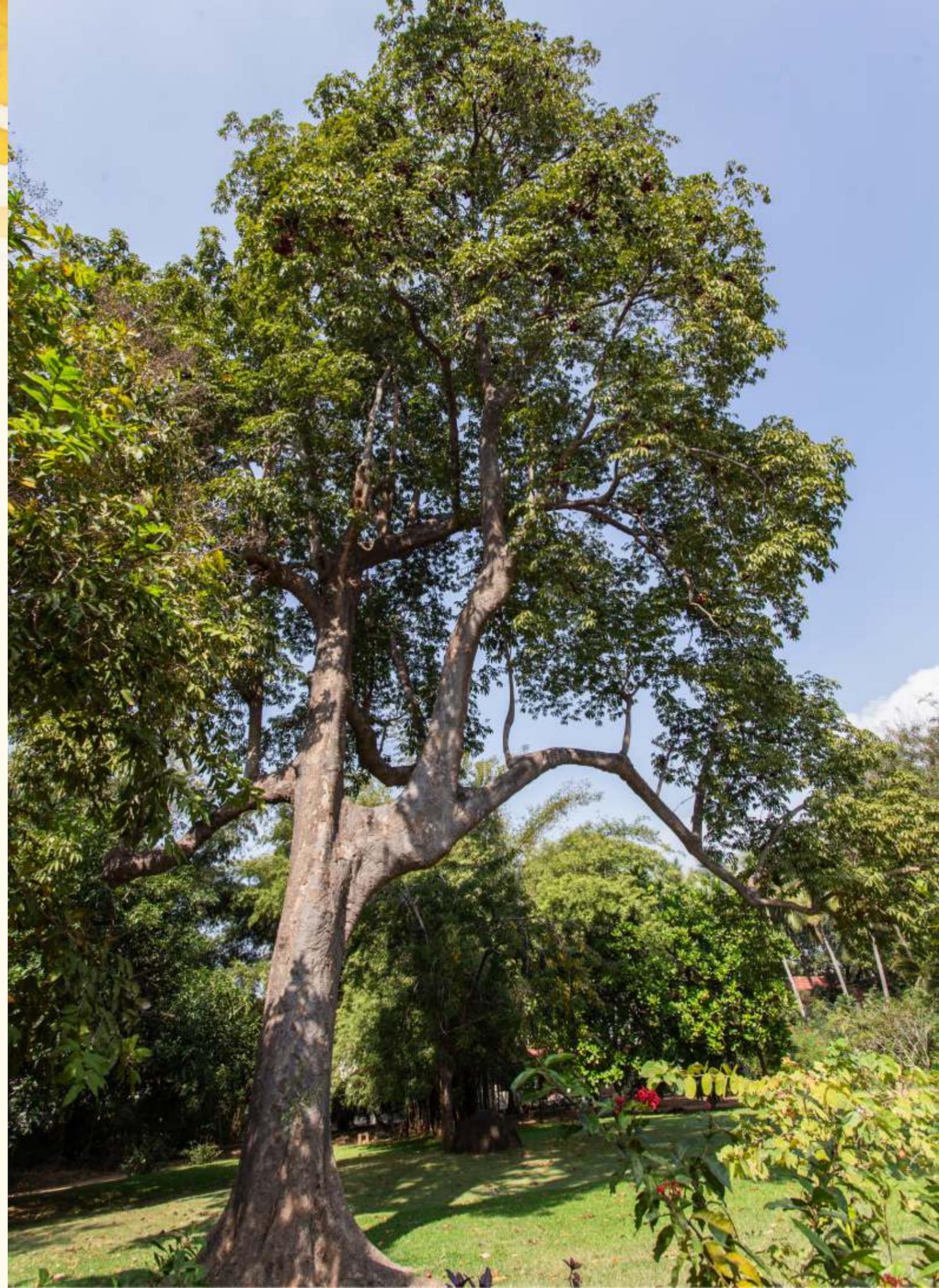
GPS Co-ordinates: 13°02.024' N, 80°25.717' E

Rising with quiet grandeur along Greenways Road within the tranquil campus of the Krishnamurti Foundation, stands *Sterculia foetida* (குதிரைப்பிடுக்கு) — the Wild Almond Tree, a towering indigenous marvel of the family Sterculiaceae. With a girth of 335 cm and an impressive height of 30 m, this stately deciduous tree is estimated to be 124–151 years old (Pham et al., 2023).

From January to April, the tree unveils striking panicles of maroon-red flowers, pollinated primarily by flies and beetles. Between March and August, bright-red woody follicles appear, later turning dark and splitting open to reveal seeds rich in oil. Ecologically and economically, the species holds remarkable value: its seed oil is a promising sustainable biodiesel source comparable to sunflower and soybean oils, while the nutrient-rich seed cake residue serves as an excellent organic fertilizer rich in Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium. The timber too is commercially valued, making it a truly multipurpose tree.

Its presence within the six-acre Vasanta Vihar campus of the Krishnamurti Foundation Trust established in 1968 feels deeply symbolic. Just as the Foundation nurtures inquiry, education, rural development, healthcare, and environmental conservation, this century-old Wild Almond Tree stands as a living testament to resilience, sustainability, and thoughtful coexistence with nature.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



20. *Azadirachta indica*

Location: Teacher Training Institute, Saidapet

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°02.135' N, 80°22.752' E

The majestic *Azadirachta indica* (Tamil: வேம்பு; English: Neem), belonging to the family Meliaceae, stands within the historic campus of the Teacher Training Institute, Saidapet, Chennai. With an impressive girth of 565 cm and a height of 18 m, this indigenous, semi-evergreen and drought-tolerant tree is estimated to be between 126–155 years old (Bohre and Chaubey, 2016). Neem is characterized by asymmetrical serrated leaflets. It produces flowers during March to May, pollinated mainly by bees and dipteran flies. The fruits set and ripen between May and July.

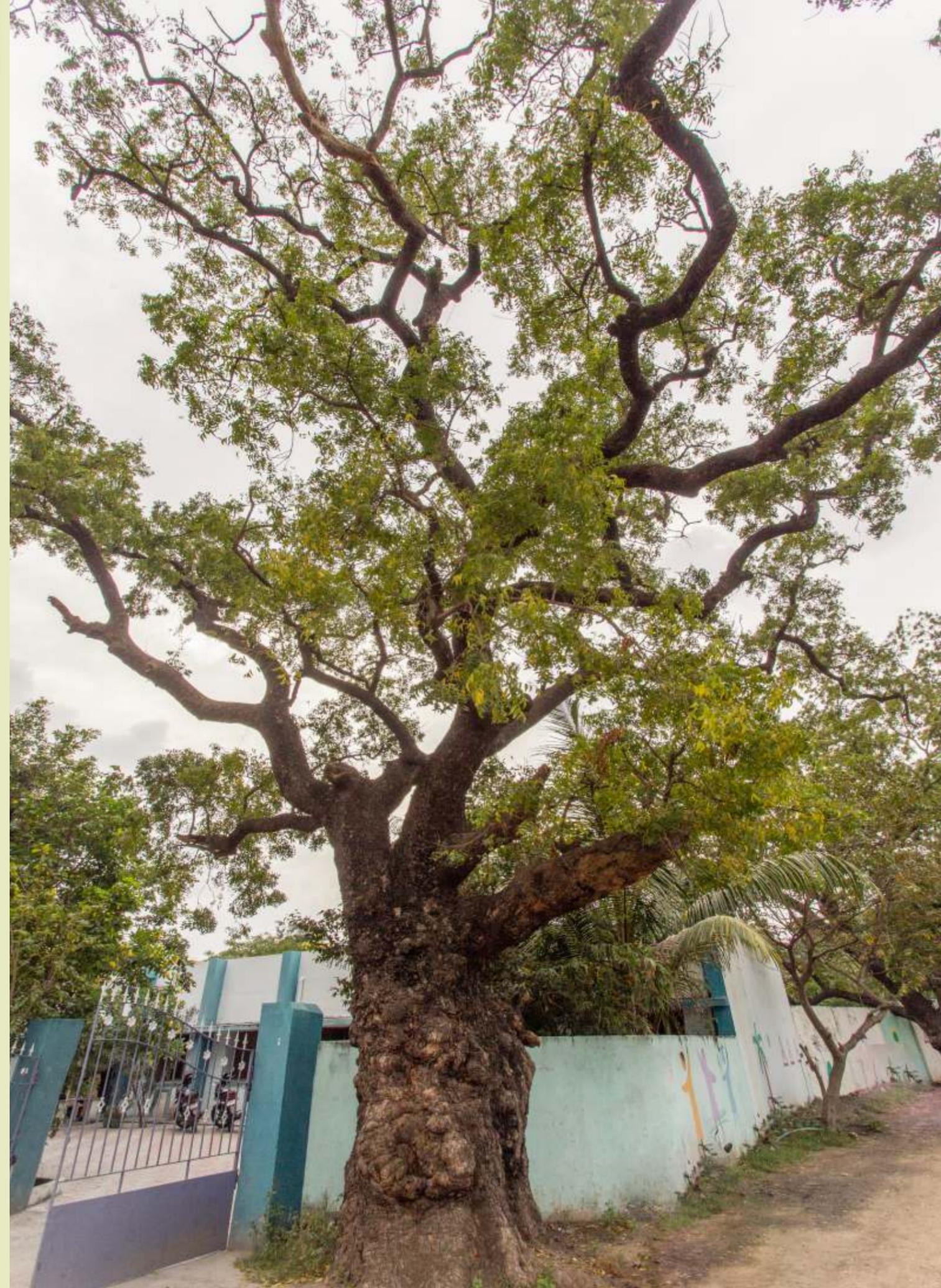
Ecologically, neem plays a significant role in urban environments. It is highly effective in air purification, trapping dust particles and absorbing harmful gaseous pollutants. The species also demonstrates high carbon fixation efficiency—often exceeding 14 $\mu\text{mol CO}_2$ per m^2 per second—making it an important contributor to carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation. Economically, neem is valued for its tree-borne oil seeds, widely used in agriculture, medicine, and industry.

The tree's location adds historical depth to its ecological importance. The Teacher Training Institute campus, spans nearly 40 acres and houses the 137-year-old IASE heritage building. Neem also finds mention in classical Tamil literature;

“வேம்பின் பைங்காய்என் தோழி தரினே” - குறுந்தொகை 196

This line describes, If my friend gives me the tender fruit of the neem tree, I will gladly accept it. Even though the neem fruit is naturally bitter, it does not feel unpleasant to me. The affection with which it is given makes it feel sweet and pleasant.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



21. *Barringtonia acutangula*

Location: Luz Church Road, Mylapore

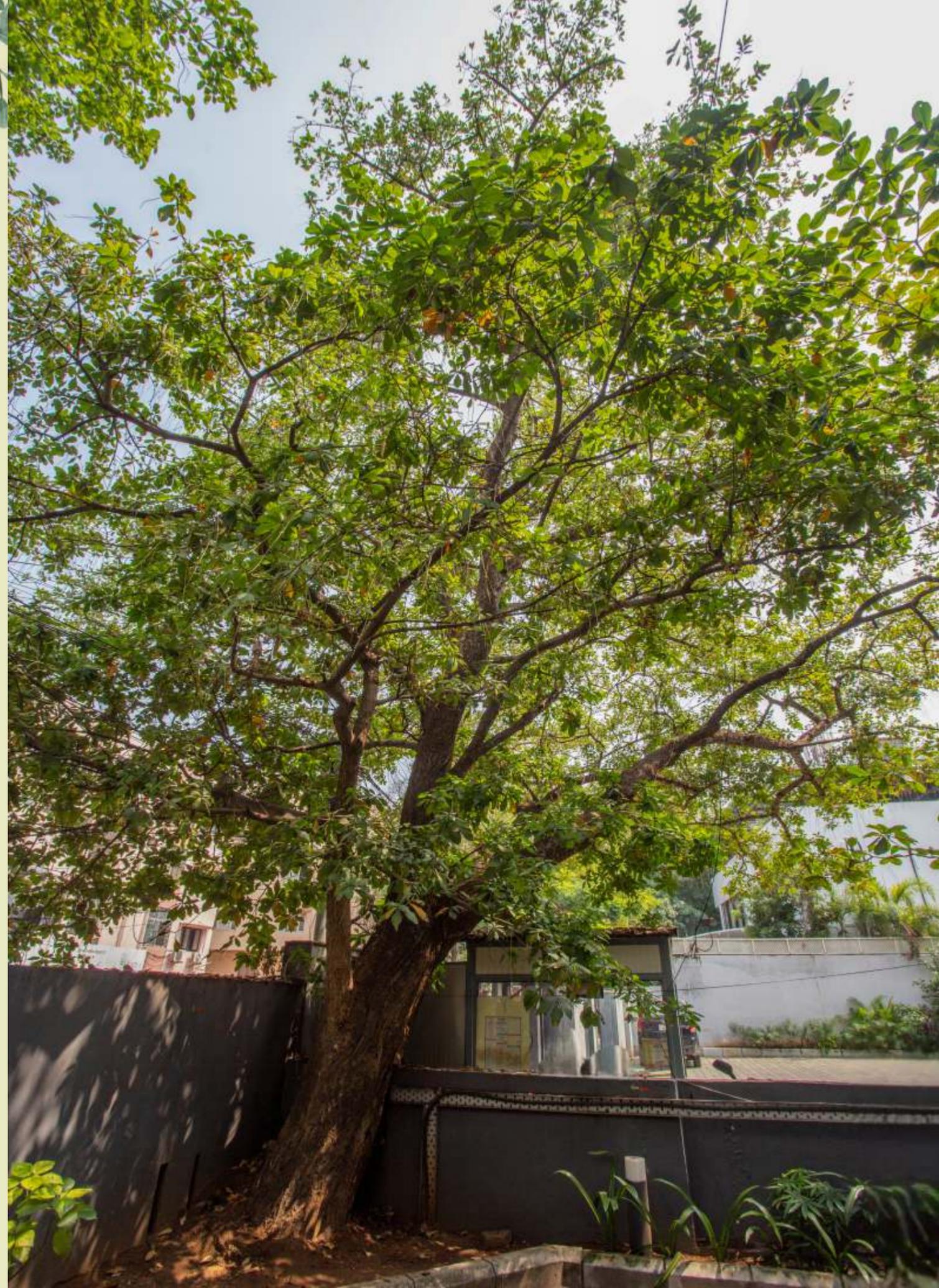
GPS Co-ordinates: 13°00.730' N, 80°26.137' E

Along the historic stretch of Luz Church Road in Mylapore rises a striking sentinel of wetland heritage - *Barringtonia acutangula*, known in Tamil as செங்கடம்பு and commonly called the Freshwater Mangrove. Indigenous to the Indian landscape and belonging to the family Lecythidaceae, this medium-sized deciduous tree reaches an impressive height of 32 metres with a girth of 189 cm, and is estimated to be between 154 and 189 years old (Pandian and Parthasarathy, 2017). From March to July, flowers appear and pollinated by bats, bees, and moths, the blossoms reinforce intricate ecological relationships within wetland habitats. Fruiting occurs from June to August, producing fruits.

Ecologically, *Barringtonia acutangula* plays a vital role in soil stabilization and erosion control, its root systems binding the soil along riverbanks and wetlands. As a keystone species of floodplain forests, it supports biodiversity by providing shade, habitat, and nourishment for fish, birds, and aquatic organisms. This tree is commonly called the Freshwater Mangrove because it grows well in wetlands, riverbanks, and waterlogged areas. Economically valued for its timber and recognized as a multi-purpose tree, it bridges utility with ecological significance.

Its presence on Luz Church Road near the historic Luz Church and the Alwarpet Anjaneyar Temple adds cultural resonance to its environmental importance. It serves as a bustling commercial and residential corridor, known for its proximity to key landmarks and local businesses.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
80% Healthy



22. *Barringtonia acutangula*

Location: May day park, Chintadaripet

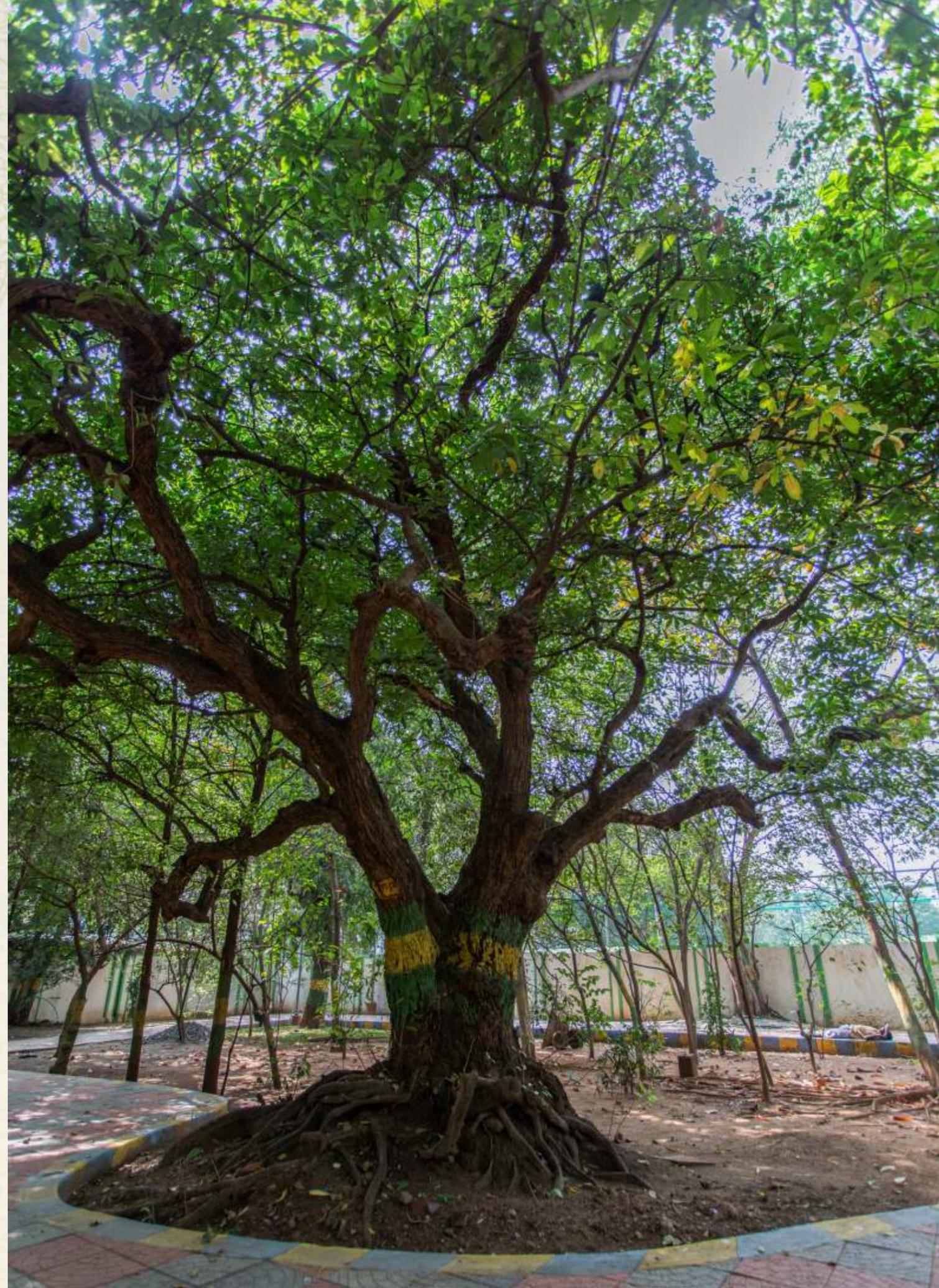
GPS Co-ordinates: 13°07.279' N, 80°27.277' E

Within the historic expanse of May Day Park in Chintadaripet rises a commanding specimen of *Barringtonia acutangula*, known in Tamil as செங்கடம்பு and widely called the Fresh Water Mangrove. Indigenous to the Indian subcontinent and belonging to the family Lecythidaceae, this remarkable tree attains a height of 40 metres with a girth of 300 cm and is estimated to be over 200 years old according to Pandian and Parthasarathy 2017. From March to July, flowers appear and pollinated by bats, bees, and moths, the blossoms reinforce intricate ecological relationships within wetland habitats. Fruiting occurs from June to August, producing fruits.

Ecologically, *Barringtonia acutangula* plays a vital role in soil stabilization and erosion control, as its strong root system binds soil along riverbanks and wetlands. Economically valued for its timber and recognized as a multipurpose tree, it bridges ecological importance with human utility. The tree is highly flood-tolerant, so it can survive in areas that remain submerged in water for long periods.

May Day Park, originally established as Napier Park in 1950, Spreading across 14.5 acres, the park is situated on Deputy Mayor Kabalamoorthy Road in Chintadaripet. Divided into two portions, the park is used to hold public meetings during the May Day celebrations and is also well equipped with facilities for cricket, football, volleyball, and badminton.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



23. *Adansonia digitata*

Location: Opposite to bodyguard Muneeswarar temple, Near Defence Campus Gate

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°07.649' N, 80°27.626' E

Standing quietly opposite the Bodyguard Muneeswarar Temple near the Defence Campus Gate is a remarkable specimen of *Adansonia digitata* (ஆனை புளிமரம்), the African Baobab, a species native to Tropical Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, belonging to the family Malvaceae. Though modest in height at 8 m, its substantial girth of 400 cm signals age and endurance, with estimates suggesting it is over 100 years old (Patruç et al., 2010). Characteristically massive, long-lived, and deciduous, the Baobab is a succulent of the savanna, often growing as a solitary sentinel.

Between May and June, the tree produces striking waxy white flowers, sweetly fragrant and opening in the evening and it is an evolutionary adaptation aligned with pollination by fruit bats and moths. From August to December, it bears hard, woody, velvety fruits, enclosing edible pulp valued for its nutritional and medicinal properties. The species is globally celebrated as the world's largest succulent, capable of storing vast reserves of water within its trunk.

Ecologically, the Baobab functions as a reservoir and refuge, its water-storing tissues sustain it through prolonged droughts, while naturally hollowed sections provide nesting spaces for birds and bees and shelter for small fauna. Economically, it remains a multipurpose tree, its pulp consumed and its parts used in traditional medicine. Even in an urban temple setting, this ancient species retains its primeval character, a living relic that bridges continents, climates, and centuries

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



24. *Butea monosperma*

Location: Gangadeshwarar temple, Purasaiwakam

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°08.475' N, 80°25.451' E

Blazing like a sacred flame against the temple skyline, Butea monosperma (புரசு / முருக்கு), the celebrated Flame of the Forest stands within the historic precincts of Gangadeeswarar Temple, Purasawalkam. This indigenous member of the Leguminosae family, measuring 94 cm in girth and rising to 12.8 m in height, is estimated to be more than 100 old (Devaranavadi et al., 2013). From February to April, its spectacular blossoms ignite the canopy. Pollinated by vibrant visitors such as the Purple Sunbird, Rosy Starling, carpenter bees, and Blue Pansy butterflies, the tree becomes a seasonal hub of ecological interaction.

By March to July, it produces flat, papery pods (10–20 cm long), initially pale green and velvety, later turning bronze-brown, each containing a single flat reddish-brown seed at the apex. Ecologically, it is a powerhouse, serving as a larval host for numerous butterfly species including Common Emigrant, Indian Sunbeam, Indian Jezebel, and Common Grass Yellow. Its resilience in barren, arid, saline, or waterlogged soils makes it invaluable for land restoration and afforestation. Economically, it yields the renowned Bengal Kino (red gum), natural dyes, and supports lac cultivation.

Its presence at the revered Gangadeeswarar Temple, an east-facing Shiva temple built and renovated by Kulothunga Chola II and regarded as one of Chennai's Pancha Bootha Sthalams representing the water element, enriches both spiritual and ecological heritage. Sangam literature immortalizes the Murukku flower in,

“பாசரும்பு ஈன்ற செம்முகை முருக்கினை” - அகநானூறு 229:16

The poet likens the Murukku blossom to a crimson face emerging freshly from its bud-laden creeper — a vivid portrayal of radiant beauty in nature.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy





25. *Diospyros malabarica*

Location: Highway Department Workshop, Saidapet

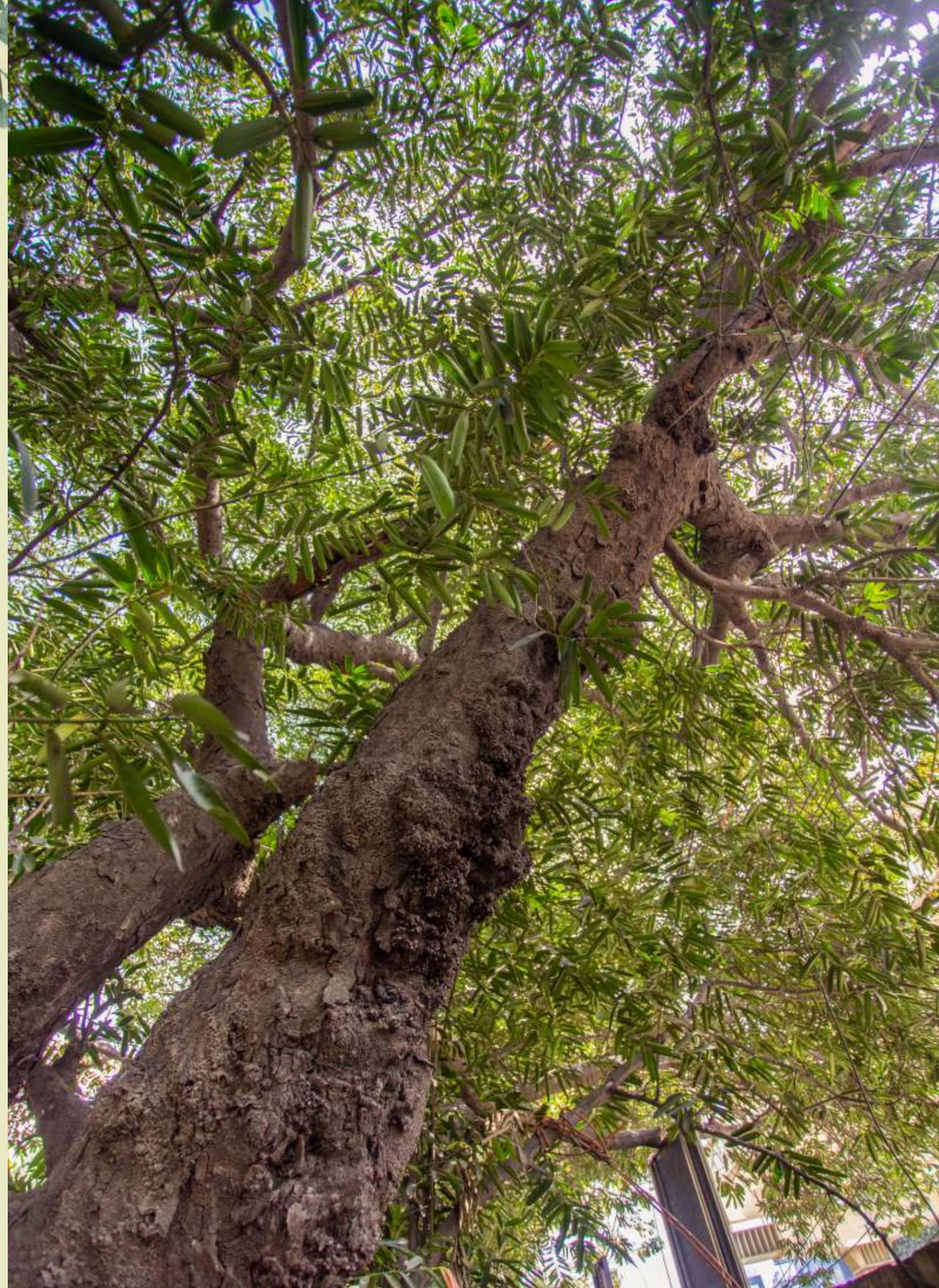
GPS Co-ordinates: 13°02.582' N, 80°23.035' E

*Amid the industrious surroundings of the Highway Department Workshop in Saidapet stands a quiet monarch of shade — *Diospyros malabarica* (தும்பிகா), the indigenous Malabar Ebony. With an impressive girth of 355 cm and a height of 10 m, this venerable tree is estimated to be 168–205 years old (Subansenee & Phengkai, 1991). A member of the Ebenaceae family, forming a broad, umbrella-like canopy.*

Between April and June, clusters of fragrant, flowers bloom, drawing birds, bees, and wasps into a lively pollination network. By June to August, round fruits marking the seasonal rhythm of the tree. Beyond its botanical elegance, the Malabar Ebony holds remarkable ecological and traditional value: the tannin-rich gum from unripe fruits has long been used to waterproof boats and preserve fishing nets, while the dark pulp serves as a natural dye and durable binder in bookbinding practices.

Renowned for its hard timber and tanning properties, this species bridges ecology and economy with quiet strength. Even within an urban-industrial setting like Saidapet, the enduring presence of this centuries-old ebony stands as a living archive of indigenous biodiversity — resilient, resourceful, and deeply rooted in the cultural landscape of Tamil Nadu.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



26. *Dolichandrone falcata*

Location: Natesan park, T Nagar

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°03.817' N, 80°26.675' E

The heritage tree *Dolichandrone falcata* (Tamil: சித்திராத்தி, English: Falcate Trumpet Flower) located at Natesan Park is an indigenous deciduous species belonging to the family Bignoniaceae. With a girth of 132 cm and height 12.8 m, its age is estimated to range between 128–156 years (Tamilselvan et al., 2021).

The species produces attractive whitish, funnel-shaped flowers during the flowering season from March to June, which are primarily pollinated by insects. The fruits are distinctive sickle-shaped capsules containing numerous winged seeds, with fruiting extending from May to December. The curved shape of the pods resembles sheep horns, a feature that makes the species easily identifiable.

Ecologically, *Dolichandrone falcata* is a hardy and drought-resistant tree suited to rocky and dry habitats, contributing to soil stabilization in regions such as the Western Ghats and the Deccan Plateau. It also shows potential in environmental remediation, including applications in industrial waste treatment and water purification. Economically important in traditional medicine, the species enhances the ecological and aesthetic value of Natesan Park, established in 1950 serving as a vital recreational and environmental asset in the heart of Chennai.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



27. *Ficus benghalensis*

Location: Thamarai Kulam, Pallikaranai

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°93.520' N, 80°20.414' E

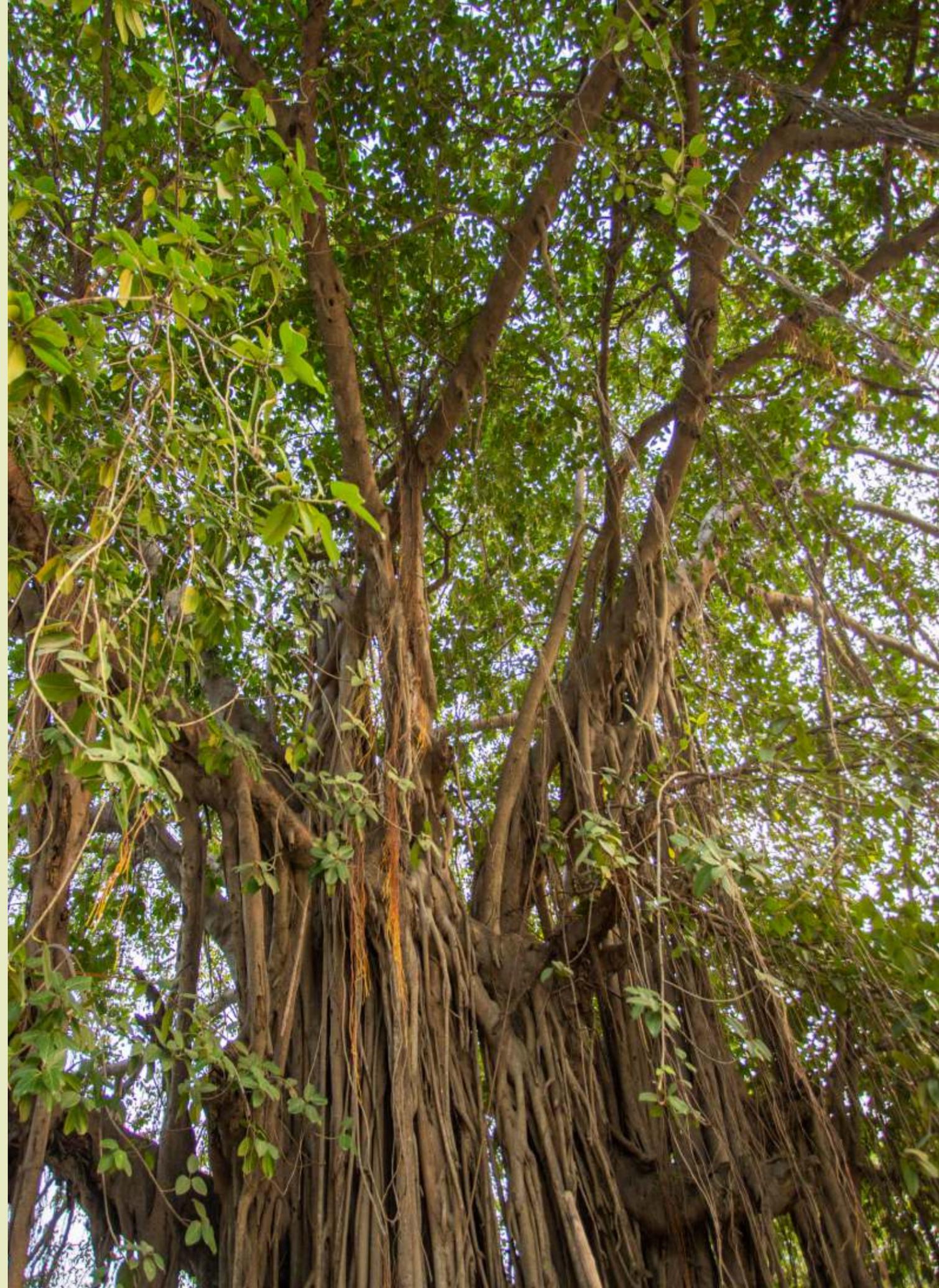
Rising prominently near Thamarai Kulam in Pallikaranai, *Ficus benghalensis*, locally known as ஆலமரம் and commonly called the Banyan, stands as a towering native presence within this marshland ecosystem. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Moraceae, this specimen reaches an impressive height of 38 metres with a girth of 122 cm and is estimated to be over 100 years old as per Patrut et al., 2023.

Flowering and fruiting occur throughout the year. The tiny unisexual flowers are concealed within a specialized fleshy, stalkless structure known as a syconium or fig, which contains male flowers that produce pollen, female flowers that develop seeds and gall flowers used for wasp breeding. Wasps serve as the exclusive pollinators in this intricate mutualistic association.

Ecologically, *Ficus benghalensis* is regarded as a keystone species, enriching biodiversity by supporting hundreds of birds, insects and other fauna, particularly in wetland landscapes such as Thamarai Kulam. The tree contributes significantly to carbon sequestration and air purification by acting as a major carbon sink and trapping particulate matter. Economically and traditionally valued for medicinal uses and bark fibre, the sacred stature of the Banyan is celebrated in Sangam literature as,

“மணிவாய்க் காக்கை மாநிறப் பெருங்கிளை
பிணிவீழ் ஆலத்து அலங்குசினை ஏறிக்
கொடுவில் எயினர் குறும்பிற்கு ஆக்கும்” - அகநானூறு 319-2

which means, black-beaked crow climbs the hanging roots of the great banyan tree with wide branches. It perches there and watches the surroundings from the lofty tree. From that height, it becomes a signal to the hunters with cruel bows who prepare for their hunt.



28. *Madhuca longifolia*

Location: Guindy National Park

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°00.278' N, 80°22.577' E

Within the dry evergreen landscape of Guindy National Park, rises the time-honoured *Madhuca longifolia* (Tamil: இலுப்பை, English: Mahua), an indigenous member of the Sapotaceae family. With a girth of 350 cm and a height of 12 m, this venerable tree is estimated to be over 200 years old (Tamilselvan et al., 2021), making it one of the enduring botanical elders of the park.

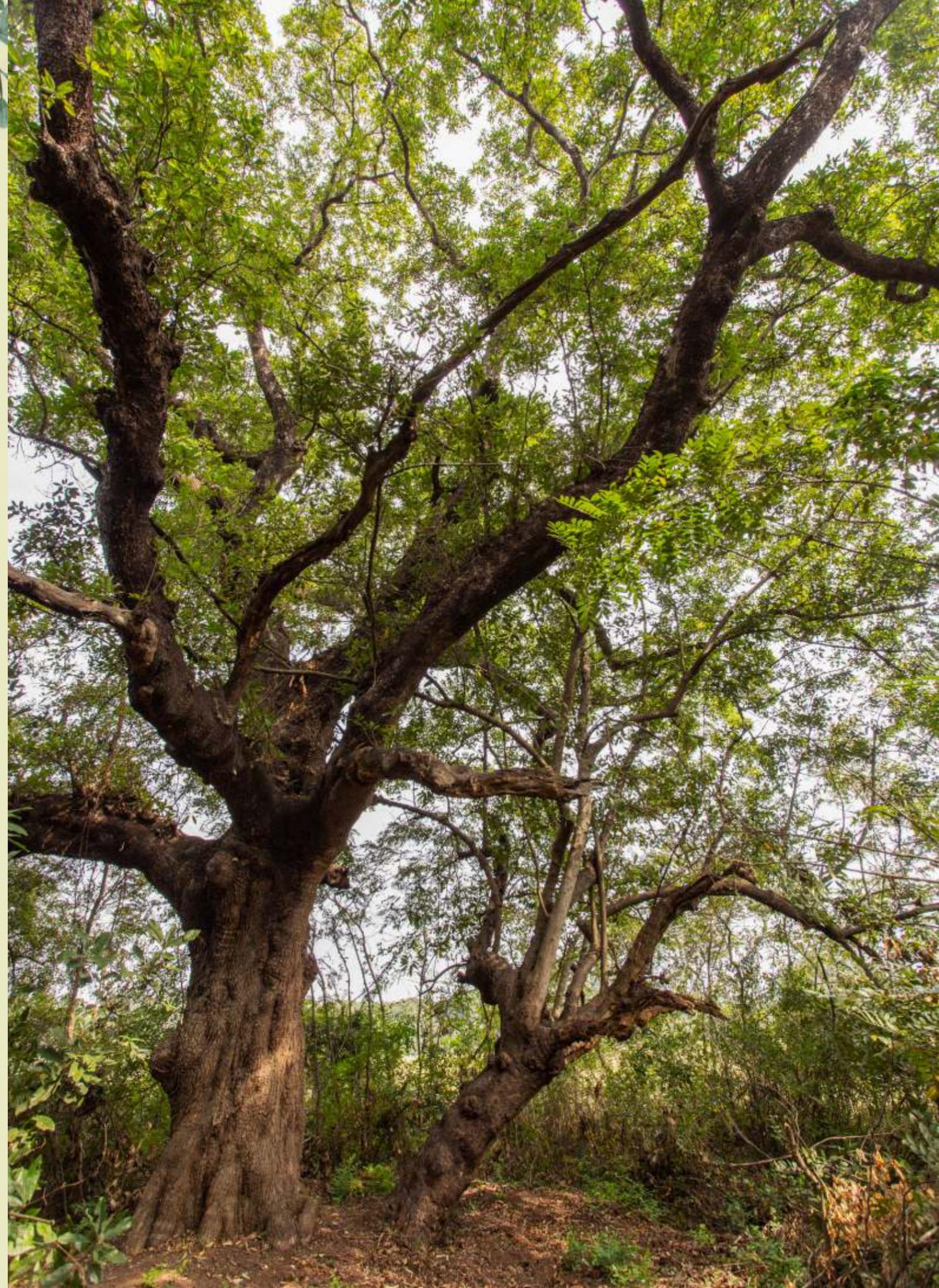
From March to April, the tree produces small, fleshy, cream-coloured flowers that open at night and gently fall to the ground by dawn, creating a fragrant carpet beneath the tree. These nocturnal blossoms are pollinated by bats, bees, and moths, reflecting a finely tuned ecological rhythm. Fruiting follows from May to July, yielding fleshy green berries containing one to four seeds. Ecologically, Mahua plays a vital role in soil reclamation and afforestation. Economically, the tree is highly valued for its tree-borne oil seeds, which support rural livelihoods and traditional industries.

Guindy National Park, spanning 2.70 km² and tracing its origins to a garden carved from the Guindy forest in the 1670s, stands today as one of the rare national parks located within a metropolitan city. The cultural fragrance of Mahua permeates Sangam literature as well.

“கான இருப்பை வேனில் வெண்பூ
அங்கண் குறுமுயல் வெருவ,
அயல கருங்கோட்டு இருப்பைபூ உறைக்குந்து” - புறநானூறு 384

This celebrates the intensely fragrant, sweet-tasting white blossoms of the Mahua tree, a flower of the arid landscape. The verse highlights its rich aroma and nectar-filled structure, reflecting the ecological and sensory abundance of the dry plains.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
90% Healthy



29. *Madhuca longifolia*

Location: 2nd Cross Street, Karpagam Garden, Adyar

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°00.655' N, 80°26.177' E

In the quiet residential enclave of 2nd Cross Street, Karpagam Garden, Adyar, stands a venerable native of the Indian landscape *Madhuca longifolia*, known in Tamil as இலுப்பை and widely called the Mahua. Belonging to the family Sapotaceae, this medium to large-sized deciduous tree bears a girth of 225 cm and rises to a height of 18 metres, with a predicted age ranging between 133 and 162 years (Pandian and Parthasarathy, 2017).

The tree's flowering season, from March to April, is marked by the appearance of small, fleshy, cream-colored blossoms. Distinctively nocturnal, these flowers bloom at night and often carpet the ground by dawn, releasing a rich fragrance into the early morning air. They attract a diverse group of pollinators, including bats, bees, and moths, reflecting the tree's ecological interdependence. Fruiting follows from May to July, producing fleshy green berries containing one to four seeds.

Economically significant as a source of tree-borne oil seeds, the Mahua has long sustained rural livelihoods while contributing to ecological restoration. Its cultural presence is equally profound, finding mention in Sangam literature. In the verse,

“ஆடுதளிர் இருப்பைக் கூடுகுவி வான் பூக்
கோடுகடை கழங்கின் அன்றமிசைத் தாஅம்” - அகநானூறு 135

describes the fragrant, sweet-tasting blossoms of the Mahua as a flower of the arid landscape, rich in scent and subtle flavour. Situated within Karpagam Gardens, an established gated residential neighbourhood in Adyar, this enduring tree stands as a harmonious blend of ecological resilience, economic value, and literary heritage.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
70% Healthy



30. *Madhuca longifolia*

Location: Theosophical Society

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°00.736' N, 80°26.629' E

Rooted in quiet dignity within the serene campus of The Theosophical Society stands *Madhuca longifolia*, known in Tamil as இலுப்பை and in English as Mahua. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Sapotaceae, this medium to large sized deciduous tree rises to 22.4 metres with a girth of 218 cm and carries a predicted age range of 128 to 157 years as recorded by Tamilselvan et al., 2021.

From March to April, the tree produces small, fleshy, cream coloured flowers that bloom at night and gently fall to the ground at dawn, creating a fragrant carpet beneath. Bats, bees and moths serve as its principal pollinators. Fruiting occurs from May to July, yielding fleshy green berries containing one to four seeds. Ecologically, *Madhuca longifolia* plays an important role in soil reclamation and afforestation, thriving even in degraded, rocky, gravelly, sandy and calcareous soils, making it highly valuable for restoring dry and wasteland ecosystems. Economically, it is widely known for its tree borne oil seeds.

The cultural fragrance of the Iluppai tree is preserved in Sangam literature at

“புல்லரை இருப்பைத் தொள்ளை வான் பூப்
பெருங்கை எண்கின் இருங்கிளை கவரும்” - அகநானூறு 149

The poet describes the scene from the arid forest (Palai), where the Mahua flowers are a primary source of food for wildlife. It depicts the behaviour of bears foraging for these sweet, fallen blossoms while the clustered dark stalked flowers spread their aroma across the dry landscape.



31. *Morinda pubescens*

Location: Department of Industrial Engineering, Anna university, Guindy

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.002' N, 80°23.424' E

Within the Department of Industrial Engineering at Anna University, Guindy, stands a mature specimen of *Morinda pubescens* (Tamil: மஞ்சளத்தி / நுணா; English: Indian Mulberry), an indigenous member of the Rubiaceae (coffee) family. With a girth of 170 cm and a height of 22.4 m, the tree is estimated to be 100–122 years old (Tamilselvan et al., 2021).

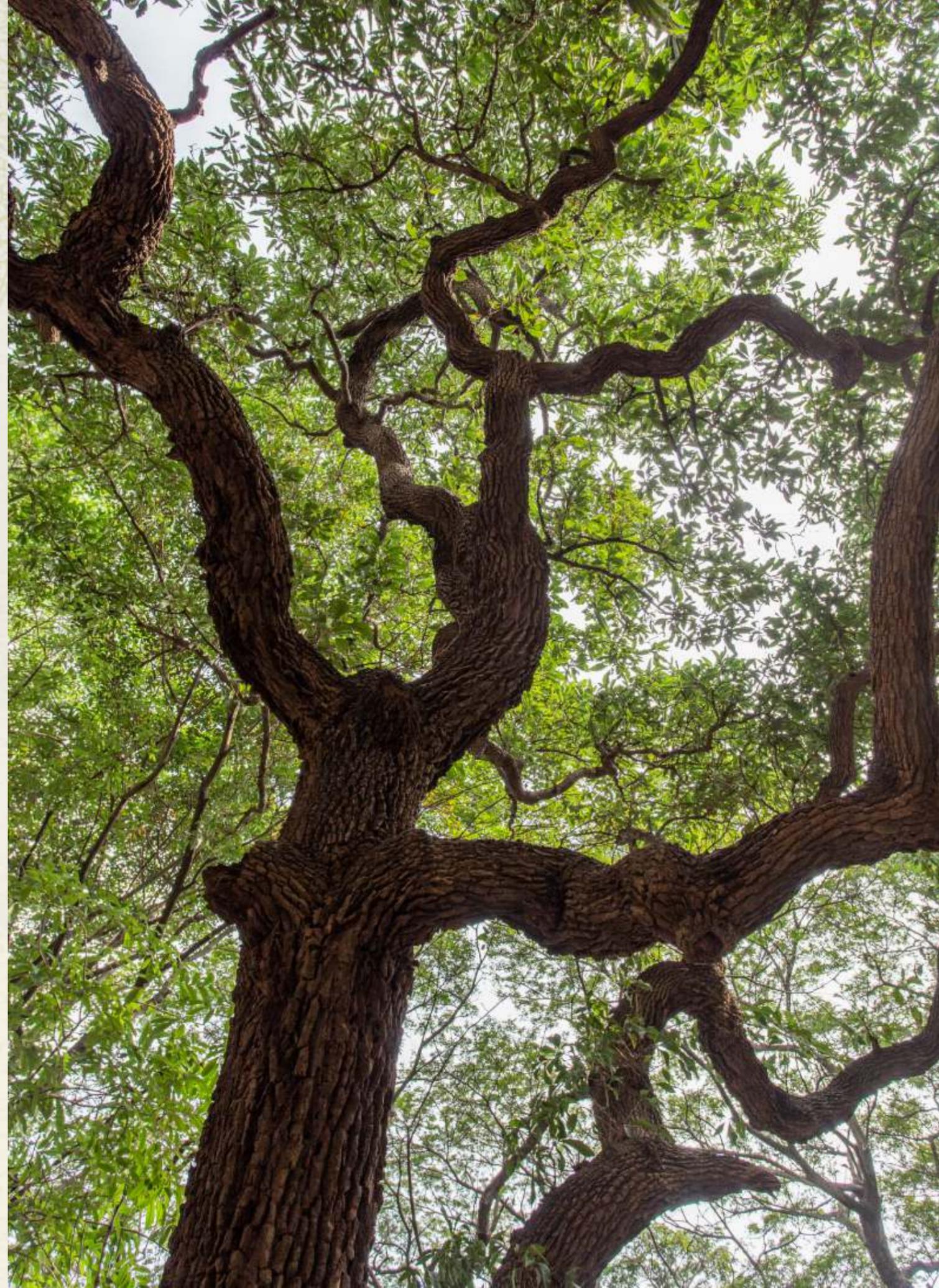
Flowering from March to June, the tree bears small, white, fragrant flowers. Pollination involves thrips, bees, and even sunbirds. Fruiting occurs between June and September, producing a fleshy, greenish-yellow, globose fruit with a distinct pungent odour reminiscent of butyric acid. Ecologically, it is drought-tolerant and plays a role in soil stabilization and rehabilitation of degraded dry lands. It creates a unique ecological niche, attracting insects such as weaver ants and fruit bats that assist in ecological interactions and seed dispersal. Economically, the species holds importance in traditional medicine systems.

Anna University, established in 1978 and named after Dr. C. N. Annadurai, occupies a 189-acre green campus bordered by the Adyar River and Raj Bhavan, forming a vital urban ecological space in Chennai. The cultural presence of *Morinda* is echoed in Sangam literature. In the lines,

“சுரும்பு களித்து ஆலும் இருஞ்சினைக்
கருங்கால் நுணவம் கமழும் பொழுதே” - ஜங்குறுநாறு: 352

describe the tree whose exterior appears dark, while its inner wood is yellow in hue. The verse subtly highlights the contrasting nature of the tree, celebrating its fragrance and vitality, and reflects how native flora have long been woven into Tamil ecological consciousness and literary tradition.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



32. *Prosopis cineraria*

Location: Nearby post office, IIT campus, Guindy

GPS Co-ordinates: 12°99.422' N, 80°23.472' E

Rooted in quiet dignity near the post office inside the lush green campus of the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, the venerable Prosopis cineraria (Tamil: வன்னி, English: Indian Mesquite) rises as a sentinel of time. With a girth of 182 cm and a height of 19 m, this indigenous tree has likely witnessed over a century of change (108–132 years; Tamilselvan et al., 2021). It has small bipinnate leaves that reduce water loss, thorny branches for protection, and a twisted, irregular trunk form commonly seen in desert landscapes. Indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, flowers during March to May followed by fruiting in May to July.

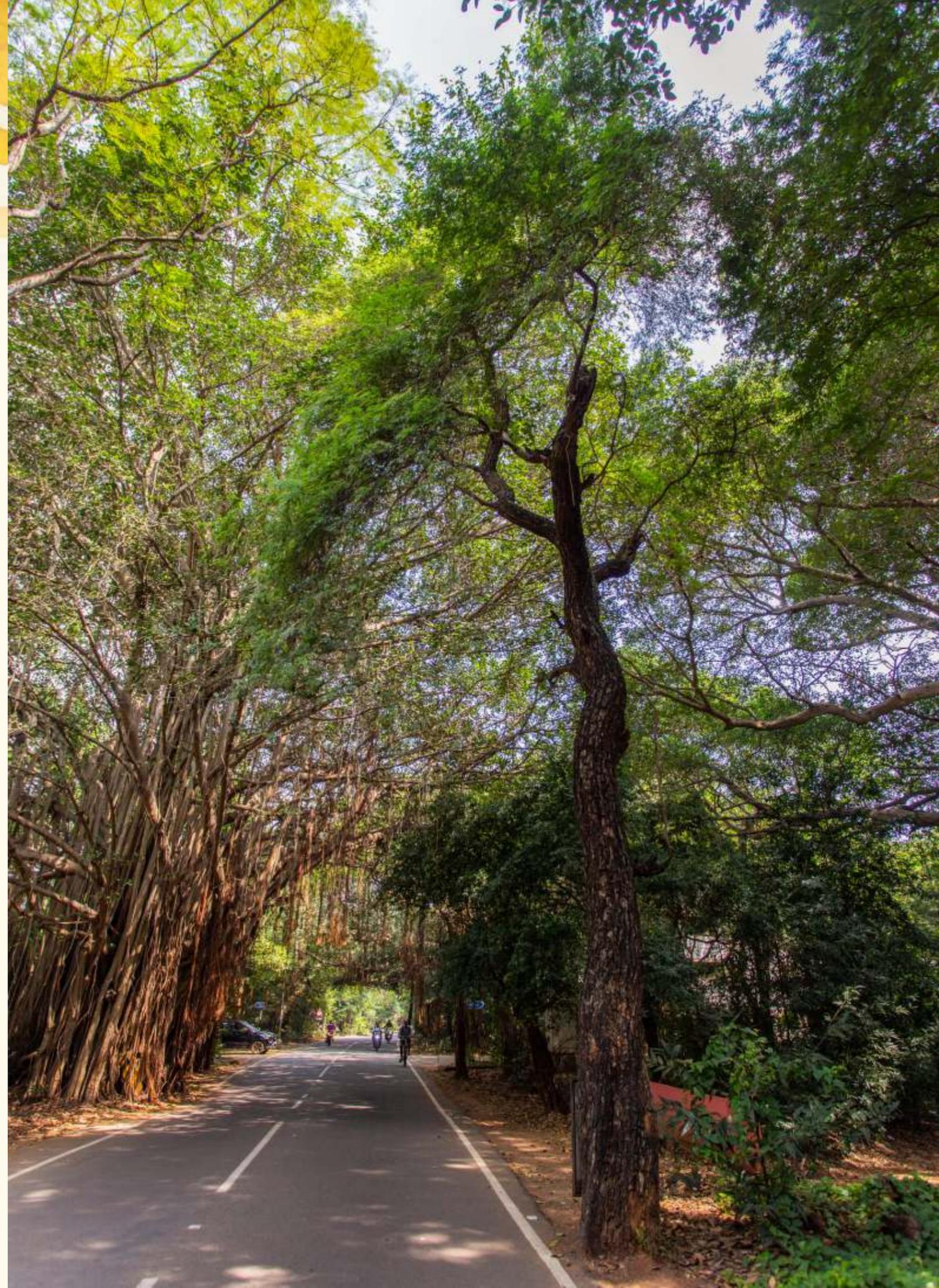
Beyond its structural grace, the Vanni is ecologically indispensable. Its deep and spreading root system binds soil and strengthens fragile landscapes, particularly in semi-arid and riverine zones. The blossoms invite birds and butterflies, and notably serve as a larval host for the Common Grass Yellow butterfly, enriching campus biodiversity. Economically valued as high-protein livestock fodder, it sustains rural livelihoods while enhancing green cover — a true multipurpose native species.

The Vanni tree also finds mention in Sangam devotional literature. In the verse,

“வார்கழல் பொலிந்த வன்கண் மழவர்
பூந்தொடை விழுவின் தலைநாள் அன்ன
தருமணல் ஞெமிரிய திருநகர் முற்றம்” - அகநானூறு 187

poetically describes the archery festival conducted for warriors. During this event, archers shot arrows at the Vanni tree. This act symbolized martial training, bravery, and preparation for battle, while also celebrating victory and warrior skill..

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



33. *Putranjiva roxburghii*

Location: Department of Chemistry, Anna university, Guindy

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.158' N, 80°23.629' E

At the Department of Chemistry, Anna University, Guindy, stands a stately specimen of *Putranjiva roxburghii* (Tamil: கருப்பலா; English: Lucky Bean Tree), an indigenous member of the family Putranjivaceae. With a girth of 220 cm and a height of 28.8 m, this medium-sized, slow-growing evergreen tree is estimated to be between 129-158 years old (Tamilselvan et al., 2021). It is distinguished by its dense canopy and gracefully drooping branches that lend an elegant architectural form.

Flowering from March to May, the tree bears small flowers, pollinated by bees, butterflies such as Albatross and Plain Puffin, and birds including bulbuls, koels, and babblers. Fruiting occurs between June and August. Ecologically, the tree serves as an effective shade provider and natural cooling agent in hot urban environments, while also supporting biodiversity, with several bird species feeding on its fruits and inhabiting its canopy. Economically, it holds importance in Ayurvedic medicine.

The tree's presence within Anna University established in 1978 spans 189 acres, bordered by the Adyar River to the north and Raj Bhavan to the south, forming one of Chennai's major green academic landscapes. The enduring Lucky Bean Tree, thriving amidst laboratories and lecture halls, symbolizes the quiet continuity of natural heritage within a premier centre of scientific learning.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



34. *Putranjiva roxburghii*

Location: Theosophical Society

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.100' N, 80°26.370' E

Within the avenues of Theosophical Society stands the stately Putranjiva roxburghii, known in Tamil as கருப்பலா and in English as the Lucky Bean Tree. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Putranjivaceae, this medium sized, slow growing evergreen tree reaches a height of 19.2 metres with a girth of 220 cm and carries a predicted age range of 156 to 191 years as recorded by Tamilselvan et al., 2021. Its dense canopy and gracefully drooping branches lend it a composed and scholarly presence befitting a university landscape.

Flowering occurs from March to May. Bees, butterflies such as Albatross and Plain Puffin, and birds including bulbuls, koels and babblers serve as pollinators. Fruiting takes place from June to August. Ecologically, the tree plays an important role in shade provision and climate regulation, acting as a cooling agent in hot urban environments, while also supporting biodiversity by offering food and habitat for birds and insects.

Economically, Putranjiva is valued in Ayurvedic medicine. Its location within the historic Adyar headquarters of the Theosophical Society—founded in 1875, the campus blends education, ecology and heritage, and this enduring Lucky Bean Tree stands as a quiet witness to generations of learning and environmental harmony.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



35. *Schleichera oleosa*

Location: Semmozhi Poonga

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°04.974' N, 80°25.126' E

*In the emerald heart of Semmozhi Poonga, where winding pathways cradle more than five hundred species within twenty acres of cultivated serenity, towers *Schleichera oleosa* (ശ്ലൈചര) — the venerable Lac Tree, also known as Kusum. With a majestic girth of 400 cm and a soaring height of 32 meters, this indigenous giant is believed to have watched over the land for more than 200 years (Iwasa, 1997). A proud member of the Sapindaceae family, it is abundant in moist deciduous forests.*

*Between January and April, tiny clusters of yellowish-brown flowers, appear. The species bears either male or female flowers, sometimes even male and bisexual blooms upon the same tree, and these modest blossoms draw devoted honey bees (*Apis* spp.) into their delicate embrace. From March to July, small pointed fruits—ripen enclosing one or two seeds within.*

*Yet this ancient Kusum is not merely ornamental — it is profoundly purposeful. Its seeds yield oil suitable for biodiesel, offering a renewable whisper of energy drawn from nature's own design. Its timber is exceptionally hard and durable, while also producing excellent quality charcoal. Economically, it holds rare distinction as the primary host of the lac insect (*Kerria lacca*), whose resin forms the foundation of traditional lac production and Kusum oil extraction. In a park named for the classical language of Tamil, this timeless tree stands as a living manuscript its bark, leaves, flowers, and fruits inscribing centuries of resilience, utility, and quiet grandeur into the green poetry of the landscape.*

ERT based Tree Health Index:
70% Healthy



36. *Strychnos nux-vomica*

Location: Nearby Ponni Amman Koil, ECR road, Injambakkam

GPS Co-ordinates: 12°92.459' N, 80°25.097' E

Near the sacred precincts of Ponni Amman Koil along the East Coast Road at Injambakkam stands an enduring native of the dry tropical landscape, our *Strychnos nux-vomica*, known in Tamil as எட்டி and commonly called the Strychnine Tree. Belonging to the family Loganiaceae, this medium-to-large, slow-growing deciduous to evergreen tree bears a girth of 300 cm and rises to a height of 15 metres, with a scientifically estimated age exceeding 200 years (Tamilselvan et al., 2021).

Flowering from February to April, the tree produces small greenish flowers that attract bees and butterflies, contributing quietly to local pollinator networks. Fruiting follows from November to March. Extracts from its leaves, bark, and seeds possess potent anti-insecticidal and nematicidal properties, traditionally employed in agriculture to manage pests, plant pathogens, and soil-borne nematodes.

Beyond its ecological role, *Strychnos nux-vomica* holds significant medicinal value and provides durable wood, underscoring its economic importance. Its cultural imprint is preserved in Sangam literature, which proclaims:

“எட்டி மரம் புலம்பெய்த வனப்பின்
சுரும்பு குழாஅத்து ஓங்கிய களிற்றின்” – புறநானூறு 192

evoking a landscape enriched by the tree, resonant with the hum of bees and the presence of majestic elephants. Standing near Ponni Amman Koil on the historic ECR corridor, this ancient tree remains a living testament to ecological resilience, traditional knowledge, and Tamil literary heritage.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
90% Healthy



37. *Swietenia mahagoni*

Location: Ramanujam computing centre, Anna university, Guindy

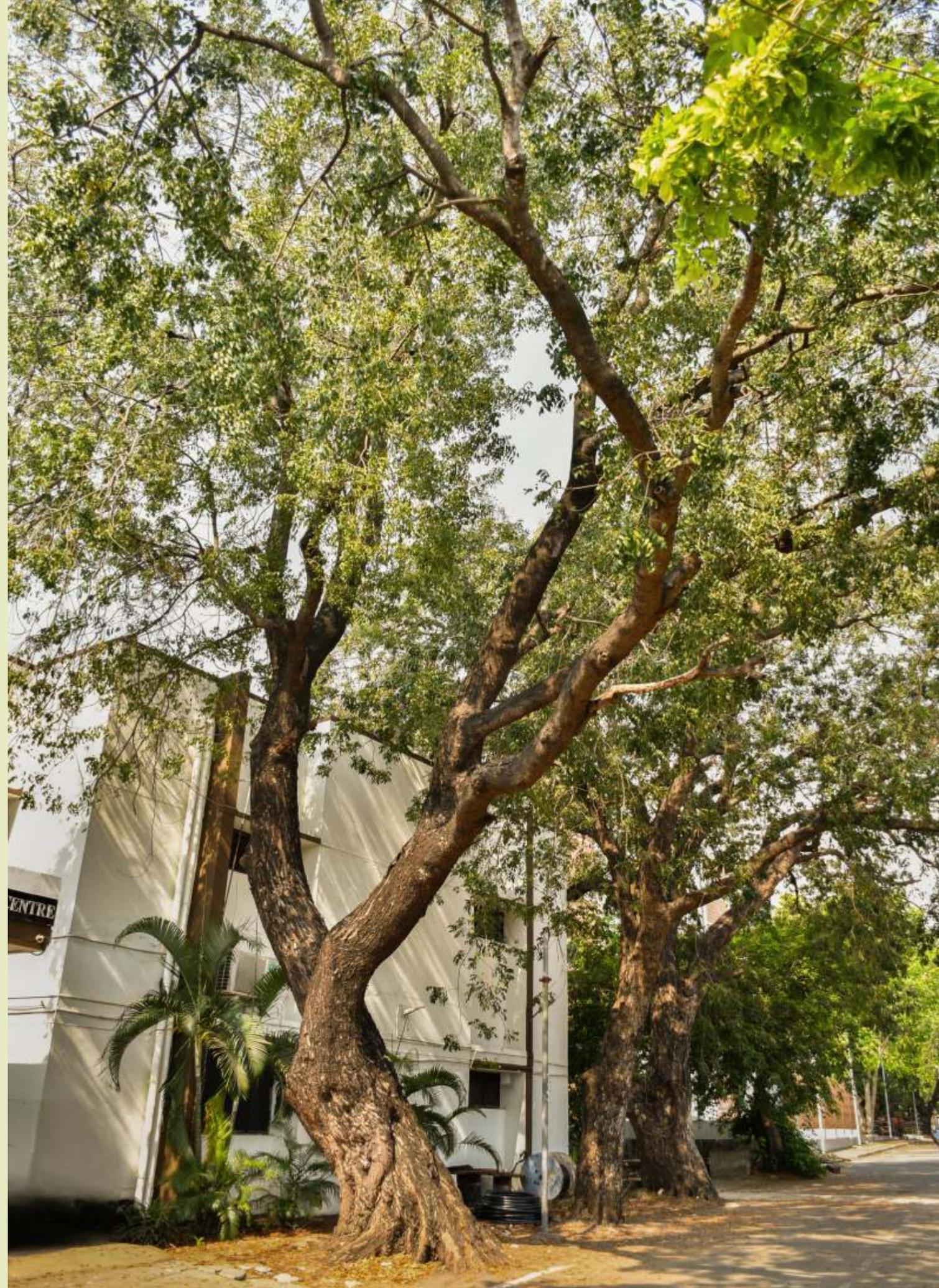
GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.055' N, 80°23.721' E

The stately *Swietenia mahagoni* (Tamil: மகாகனி; English: Small-leaved Mahogany), belonging to the family Meliaceae, is located at the Ramanujan Computing Centre within Anna University, Guindy. With a height of 38.4 m and girth of 347 cm, this Caribbean-origin species is estimated to be between 113–139 years old, based on comparative growth data from the historic tree at St. Matthias Church, Vepery. During April to July, it produces small, fragrant, greenish-yellow flowers, attracting thrips, bees, and moths. Fruiting occurs from July to September, forming woody capsules that split upward from the base to release numerous flat, winged seeds.

Ecologically, *Swietenia mahagoni* contributes significantly to carbon sequestration and air quality improvement, as large, long-lived trees absorb substantial amounts of atmospheric CO₂ and help mitigate warming. Owing to its tall canopy and straight growth form, it is widely used in agroforestry systems as a shade tree for crops such as coffee and cocoa, and to provide shelter for younger plantation trees. Economically, the species is highly valued for its premium-quality timber, known for durability, workability, and aesthetic grain.

The tree's presence at the Ramanujan Computing Centre adds symbolic value to its ecological importance. The computing centre was established in 1963 at the College of Engineering, Guindy campus and later renamed in honour of the mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan during his birth centenary celebrations. The enduring mahogany tree standing within this technologically vibrant academic space reflects a harmonious coexistence of natural heritage and scientific advancement.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
90% Healthy





38. *Swietenia mahagoni*

Location: St. Matthias Church, Veppery

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°08.702' N, 80°26.123' E

Rising with quiet dignity within the historic precincts of St. Matthias Church, the venerable *Swietenia mahagoni* (மகாபகனி) — Small-leaved Mahogany stands as a living remnant of colonial-era plantings in Veppery, one of North Chennai's oldest neighbourhoods shaped during the British settlement of Madras. Native to the Caribbean and belonging to the Meliaceae family, this mostly evergreen tropical tree measures 280 cm in girth and 10 m in height, with a predicted age of 102 years old based on growth data from the same site.

From April to July, fragrant flowers blossoms attract thrips, bees, and moths, sustaining seasonal pollinator activity. By July to September, the tree produces woody capsules releasing numerous flat, winged seeds designed for wind dispersal, a graceful mechanism of regeneration embedded within its architecture.

Ecologically, the tree contributes significantly to carbon sequestration and air-quality improvement, absorbing substantial atmospheric CO₂ over its long lifespan. Economically prized for its durable and richly grained timber, the species has long been associated with fine woodworking and structural applications. In Veppery's layered urban landscape, this mahogany stands not merely as a tree, but as a botanical heirloom bridging Caribbean origins with Chennai's historic green legacy.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



39. *Swietenia mahagoni*

Location: Opposite to Director Residence, IIT campus

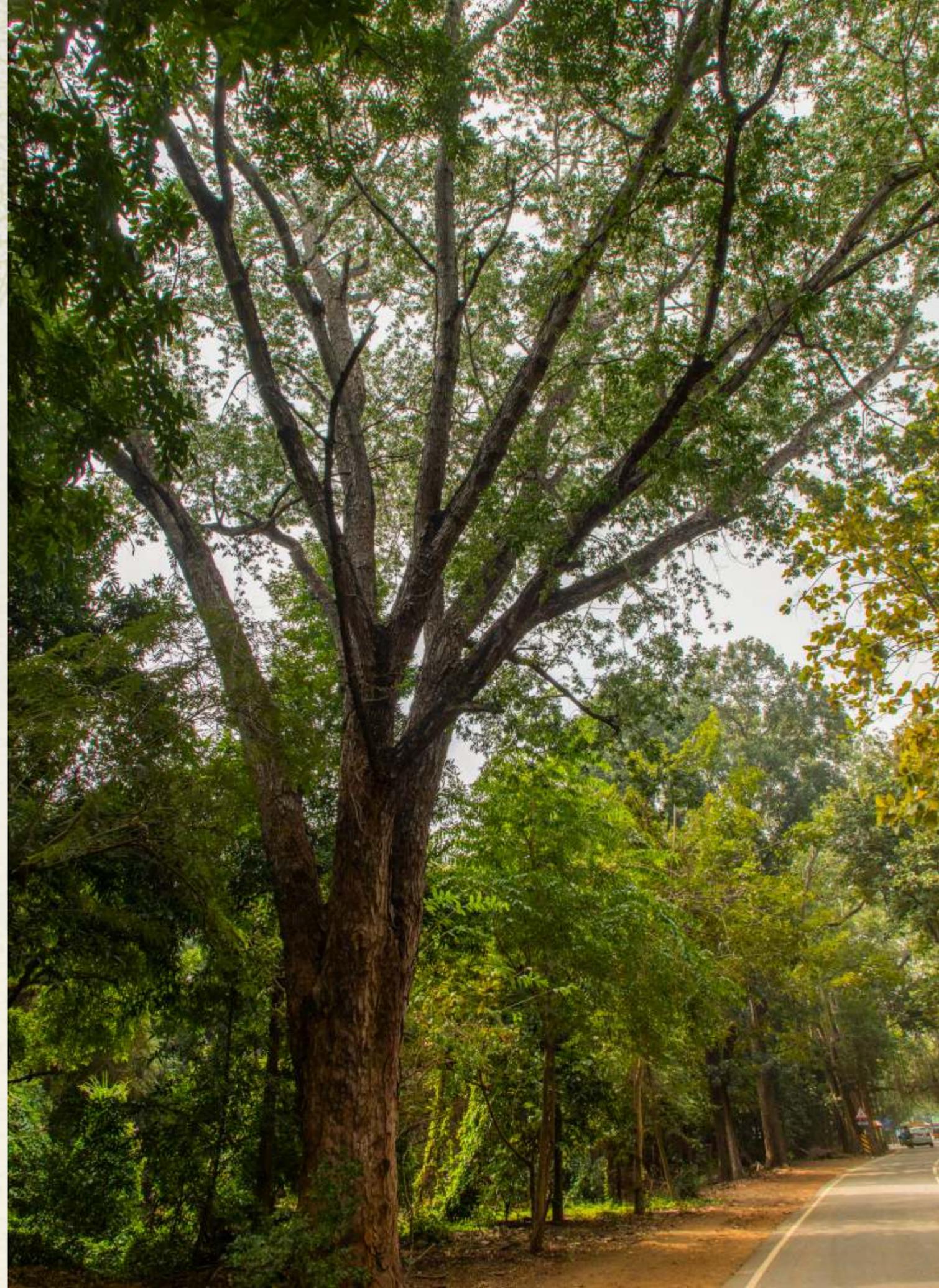
GPS Co-ordinates: 12°99.331' N, 80°23.263' E

Opposite the Director's Residence within the verdant campus of IIT Madras stands a stately specimen of *Swietenia mahagoni*, known in Tamil as மகாகனி and commonly called the Small-leaved Mahogany. Native to the Caribbean and belonging to the family Meliaceae, this large, fast-growing tropical tree rises to a height of 20 metres with a commanding girth of 326 cm, its age estimated between 107 and 130 years based on growth data referenced from the tree at St. Matthias Church, Vepery. During April to July, it produces small, fragrant, greenish-yellow flowers, attracting thrips, bees, and moths. Fruiting occurs from July to September, forming woody capsules that split upward from the base to release numerous flat, winged seeds.

Ecologically, *Swietenia mahagoni* plays a vital role in carbon sequestration and air quality improvement, absorbing substantial carbon dioxide as a long-lived canopy tree. Its towering crown also makes it valuable in agroforestry systems, where it provides shade for crops such as coffee and cocoa and shelters younger plantation trees.

Economically prized for its high-quality timber, the Small-leaved Mahogany has long been associated with durability and craftsmanship. Its presence within the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, one of the country's premier institutions, enduring mahogany stands as a symbol of strength, sustainability, and the harmonious coexistence of learning and nature.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
95% Healthy



40. *Swietenia mahagoni*

Location: Egmore Museum

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°07.013' N, 80°25.669' E

*Rising prominently within the 16.25-acre campus of Government Museum, Chennai, *Swietenia mahagoni*, locally called மகாஹாணி and known in English as Small leaved Mahogany, represents a notable exotic presence in Chennai's urban tree heritage. Native to the Caribbean and belonging to the family Meliaceae, this large, fast-growing, mostly evergreen tropical tree attains a height of 18 metres and a girth of 295 cm. Based on comparative growth data from a reference tree at St. Matthias Church, Vepery, its age is estimated more than 100 years.*

Flowering occurs from April to July, attract thrips, bees and moths as major pollinators. Fruiting follows between July and September, upon maturity, releasing numerous flat, winged seeds adapted for wind dispersal.

*Ecologically, *Swietenia mahagoni* plays an important role in carbon sequestration and improvement of air quality, as large canopy trees absorb substantial carbon dioxide and help mitigate atmospheric warming. Its tall, spreading crown makes it valuable in agroforestry systems, providing shade for crops such as coffee and cocoa and sheltering younger plantation trees. Economically, it is highly prized for its durable and fine-grained timber, making the stately Mahogany, both an environmental asset and a tree of enduring economic significance.*

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



41. *Syzygium cumini*

Location: Governement Arts College, Egmore

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°08.067' N, 80°26.638' E

*A majestic indigenous presence in the heart of Egmore, *Syzygium cumini*, locally called நாவல் and widely known as Jamun, rises prominently within the campus of Government College of Fine Arts, Chennai. Belonging to the family Myrtaceae, this fast-growing, long-lived evergreen tree attains a height of 32 metres with a girth of 325 cm and is estimated to be over 200 years old as per Devaranavadgi et al., 2013.*

*Flowering occurs from March to April, attract honey bees and house flies as major pollinators. Fruiting follows from May to July, producing globose fruits that are green to red when young and turn deep dark blue when ripe; the fruits are edible and highly valued. Ecologically, *Syzygium cumini* is significant in agroforestry and soil conservation, providing shade for crops such as coffee, cocoa and bananas, serving as windbreaks along farm bunds, and effectively aiding in the reclamation of degraded, waterlogged or marshy lands.*

Economically important for its nutritious fruits and medicinal properties, the tree contributes both to livelihoods and ecological stability. The institution it graces, founded in 1850 as the Madras School of Arts and later relocated to its present campus on E.V.R. Periyar Salai, stands as a cultural landmark of Chennai. The abundance and beauty of the Naval tree are echoed in Sangam literature in

“நாவலொடு பெயரிய பொலம்புனை அவிரிழை”
- திருமுருகாற்றுப்படை:18

which means, the Jamun tree stands heavy with ripe fruits, its flowering branches spreading gracefully, creating a vivid image of flourishing natural beauty..

ERT based Tree Health Index:
90% Healthy



42. *Syzygium cumini*

Location: Guindy National Park

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°00.263' N, 80°22.452' E

Deep within the biodiverse matrix of Guindy National Park, the ancient *Syzygium cumini* (Tamil: நாவல், English: Jamun) stands as a resilient native of the Myrtaceae family. With a girth of 290 cm and a height of 10 m, this fast-growing yet remarkably long-lived evergreen tree is estimated to be over 200 years old (Devaranavdgi et al., 2013).

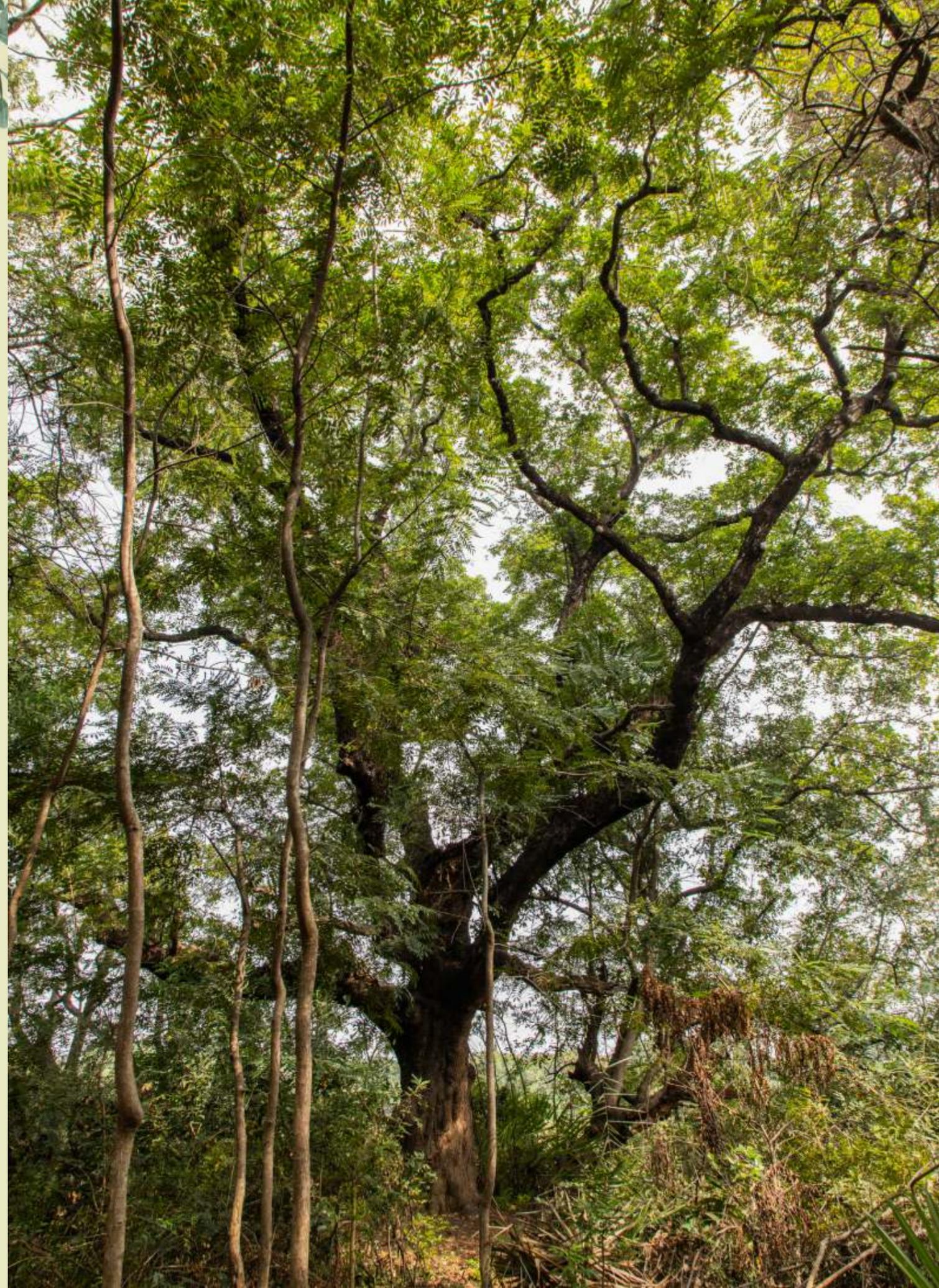
During March to April, the tree bursts into clusters of small, fragrant, greenish-white flowers. These blossoms attract honey bees and house flies, facilitating pollination. From May to July, the tree yields globose fruits that transition from green to red and finally ripen into a deep, lustrous blue-black hue. The edible fruits are nutritionally rich and widely valued for their medicinal properties. Ecologically, it plays a crucial role in agroforestry and soil conservation, and it is particularly suited for land reclamation in degraded, waterlogged, or marshy environments, where its hardy root system stabilizes soil and enhances ecological recovery.

The cultural imprint of Jamun extends deep into Tamil literary tradition. In the line,

“நாவலந் தண்பொழில் வடபொழில் ஆயிடை” - பரிபாடல் 5:8

This states that the Naaval tree found in all areas with vast geographic presence. The verse captures the aesthetic richness and ecological abundance of the landscape, affirming the Jamun's place not only in forest ecology but also in the poetic imagination of Tamil heritage.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
90% Healthy



43. *Tamarindus indica*

Location: Pondicherry Road, Kotturpuram

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.765' N, 80°24.760' E

The monumental *Tamarindus indica* (Tamil: புளி; English: Tamarind), belonging to the family Fabaceae (Detarioideae), stands along Pondicherry Road, Kotturpuram, Chennai. With an impressive girth of 445 cm and a towering height of 38.4 m, this long-lived tree is estimated to be over 200 years old (Devaranavadi et al., 2013). Though native to Tropical Africa, it is now deeply naturalized and culturally embedded in India. The flowers, appearing from July to September, pollination is facilitated by butterflies, bees (including honey bees, stingless bees, and carpenter bees), wasps, and flies.

Fruiting occurs from January to April, producing indehiscent pods enclosed within a crustaceous fruit wall. Ecologically, the tamarind tree plays a vital role in carbon sequestration by capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide, contributing to climate change mitigation. Its expansive canopy provides dense shade and significantly improves the surrounding microclimate. For this reason, it is widely planted along roadsides, in villages, and around homes. Economically, the tree is of immense value for its edible fruit, which forms an essential ingredient in culinary traditions across India and beyond.

The tree's location in Kotturpuram situated on the southern banks of the Adyar River adds historical and cultural depth to its ecological stature. The presence of a centuries-old tamarind tree within this historically layered landscape symbolizes continuity between natural heritage, riverine ecology, and Chennai's enduring cultural legacy.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
80% Healthy



44. *Tamarindus indica*

Location: St. George Anglo Indian School, EVR Road, Shenoy Nagar

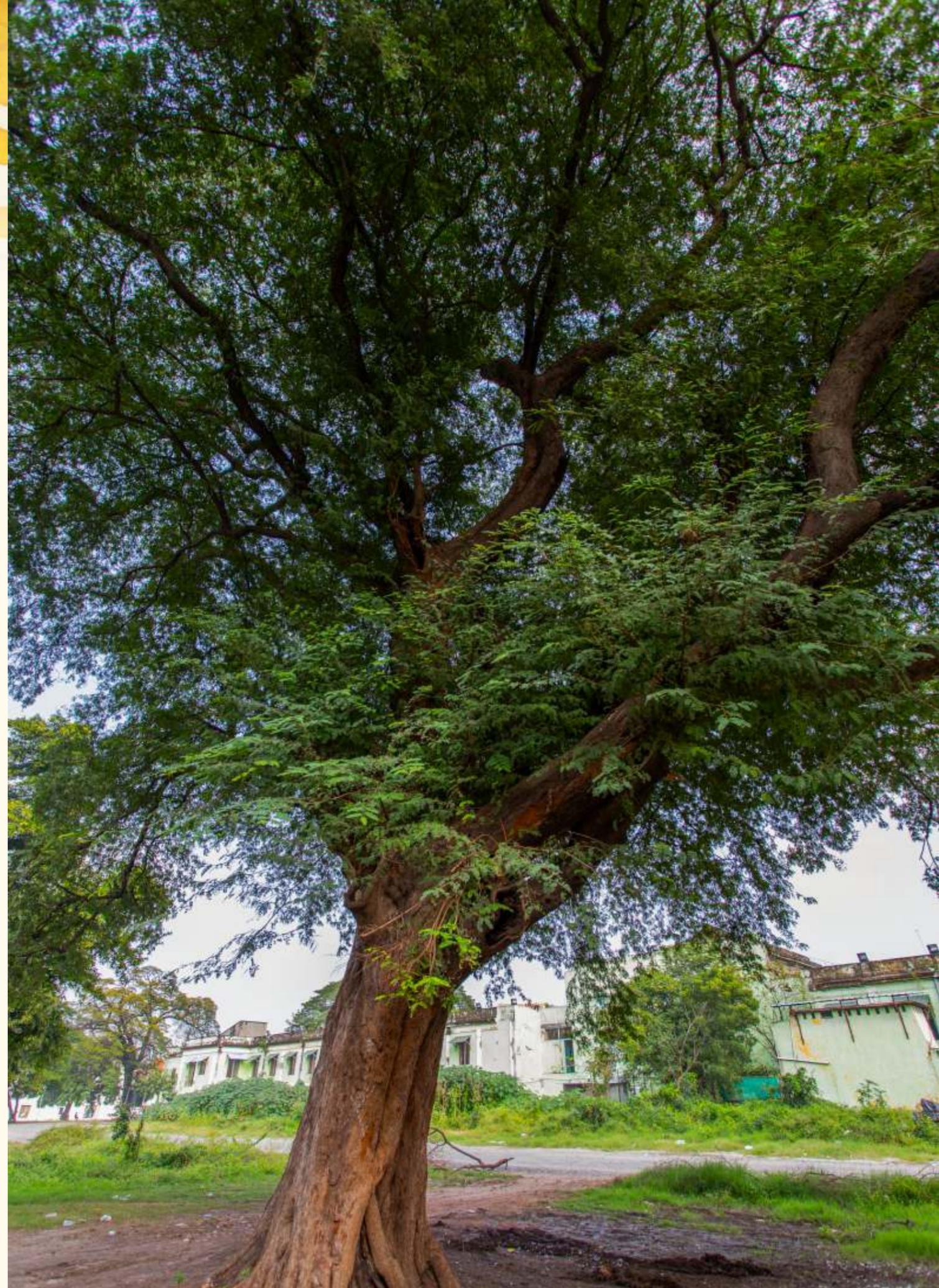
GPS Co-ordinates: 113°07.838' N, 80°22.515' E

Spreading its broad canopy across generations within the campus of St. George's Anglo-Indian Higher Secondary School, Tamarindus indica, locally known as തമര and commonly called Tamarind, stands as a living witness to over two centuries of history. Native to tropical Africa and belonging to the family Fabaceae (Detarioideae), this long-lived, large, slow-growing evergreen or semi-evergreen tree reaches 17 metres in height with a girth of 376 cm and is estimated to be more than 200 years old as per Devaranavadi et al., 2013

Though native to Tropical Africa, it is now deeply naturalized and culturally embedded in India. The flowers, appearing from July to September, pollination is facilitated by butterflies, bees (including honey bees, stingless bees, and carpenter bees), wasps, and flies. Fruiting occurs from January to April, producing indehiscent pods enclosed within a crustaceous fruit wall.

Ecologically, Tamarind plays an important role in carbon sequestration, capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide, and significantly improving microclimates by providing shade in dry tropical environments. It is widely planted in villages, urban streets and homesteads for temperature regulation and comfort. Economically valued for its edible fruits and culinary importance, the enduring tree harmoniously blends nourishment, environmental service and historical continuity within one of India's oldest educational institutions.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
70% Healthy



45. *Terminalia arjuna*

Location: Villivakkam railway station

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°11.010' N, 80°20.923' E

Commanding attention beside the bustle of Villivakkam Railway Station stands *Terminalia arjuna* (நீர் மருது), the majestic Arjun Tree, an indigenous giant of the Combretaceae family. With an impressive girth of 345 cm and a towering height of 32 m, this living monument is estimated between 203 to 248 years old (Tamilselvan et al., 2021). A large evergreen species marked by buttressed trunks, lends it a distinguished appearance amidst the urban landscape.

From April to July, small yellowish flowers emerge, attracting active pollinators such as *Apis cerana*, *Apis dorsata*, and the butterfly *Danaus chrysippus*. By September to November, fruits start the cycle. Ecologically, the species is invaluable, its deep and robust root system firmly stabilizes riverbanks, canals, and water channels, making it a frontline defender against soil erosion. It is also integrated into agroforestry systems for its relatively fast growth and timber potential, and notably serves as a host plant for Tassar silkworms.

For centuries, the bark of the Arjuna tree has been valued in Siddha and Ayurveda for supporting heart health and strengthening the circulatory system. Traditional physicians regarded it as a symbol of strength and resilience, reflecting the tree's own enduring presence along riverbanks. The Neermaruthu, thus stands as a living link between nature and traditional healing knowledge.

Its presence at Villivakkam, part of the historic Chennai Central–Arakkonam suburban railway corridor creates a compelling contrast between ecological antiquity and modern transit infrastructure.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
80% Healthy





46. *Terminalia arjuna*

Location: St Bishop church Cathedral Road

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°08.186' N, 80°25.893' E

Along the dignified stretch of Cathedral Road, beside the historic St. George's Cathedral, rises *Terminalia arjuna* (நீர் மருது) the revered Arjun Tree, a native sentinel of the family Combretaceae. With a commanding girth of 415 cm and a noble height of 25 meters, this evergreen giant is estimated to be more than 200 years old (Tamilselvan et al., 2021)

From April to July, slender long unfurl clusters of small yellowish flowers, modest in size yet alive with activity. Honey bees (*Apis cerana*, *Apis dorsata*) and butterflies such as *Danaus chrysippus* gather to partake in this seasonal offering. By September through November, woody brown fruits take form, ovoid and sculpted with wings swaying gently beneath the cathedral sky.

Ecologically, *Terminalia arjuna* is a guardian of the waters. Its deep and resilient root system anchors riverbanks, streams, and canals, standing firm against soil erosion and safeguarding fragile edges of land. In agroforestry systems, it is valued for its relatively fast growth and timber potential, though working its wood demands patience and skill. Economically, it serves as timber and as feed for the Tassar silk worm, quietly contributing to traditional livelihoods.

The Neermaruthu is a natural guardian of riverbanks. Its deep roots bind the soil and reduce erosion, while its wide canopy provides shade that moderates the temperature of streams and wetlands. By stabilizing the edges of water bodies, the tree quietly sustains the health of river ecosystems. Even today, beneath its wide embrace on Cathedral Road, the ancient Arjun seems to echo that timeless rhythm of grace, endurance, and life.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



47. *Terminalia arjuna*

Location: MLA Hostel

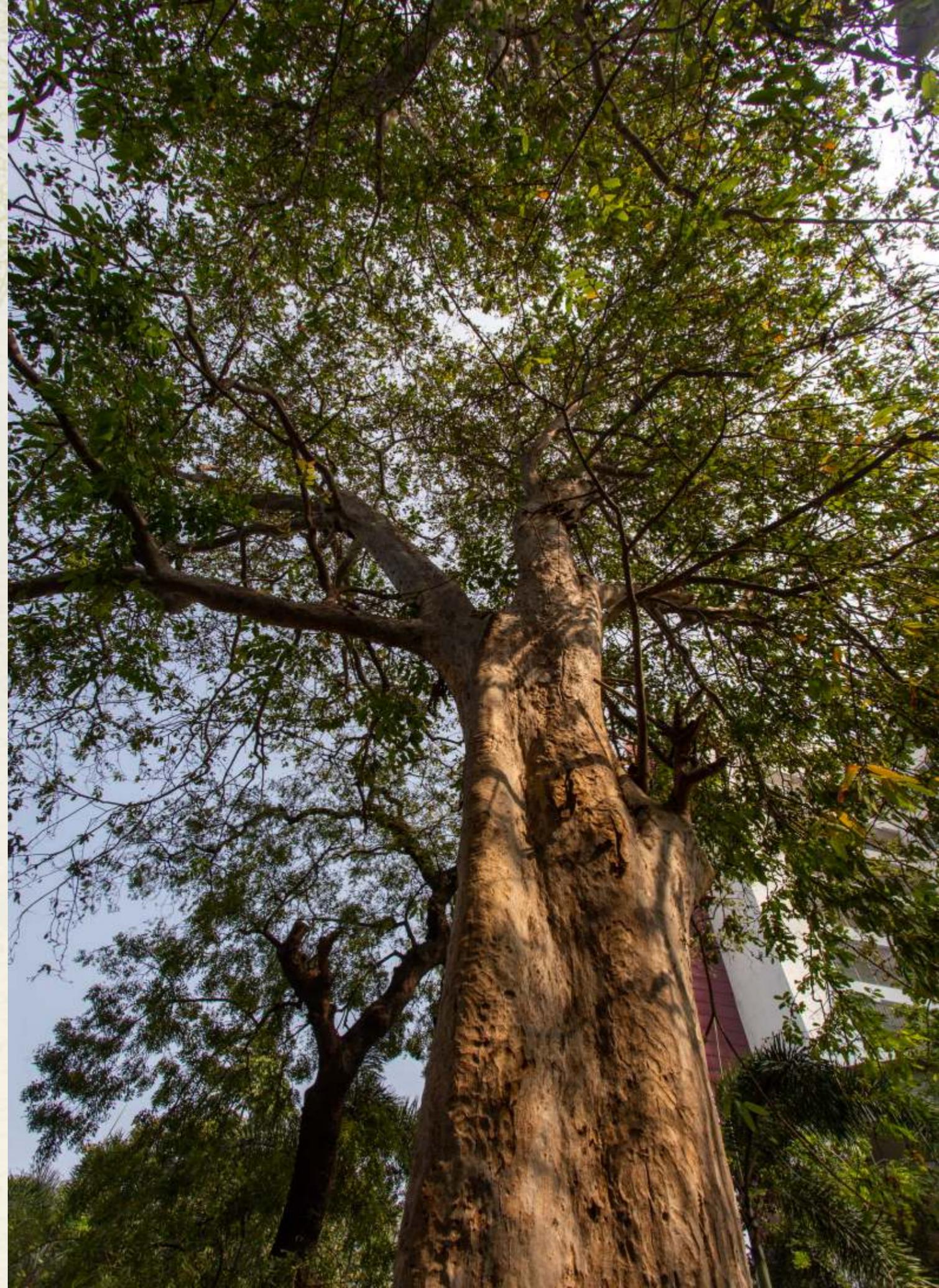
GPS Co-ordinates: 13°06.860' N, 80°27.605' E

Within the precincts of the MLA Hostel campus in Chennai rises a towering emblem of riparian strength, *Terminalia arjuna*, known in Tamil as நீர் மருது and widely called the Arjun Tree. Indigenous to the Indian subcontinent and belonging to the family Combretaceae, this majestic evergreen attains an impressive height of 38.4 metres with a girth of 305 cm, and is estimated to be over 200 years old (Pandian and Parthasarathy, 2017). Often marked by buttressed trunks and gracefully drooping branchlets, the tree presents a commanding yet elegant silhouette.

From April to July, small yellowish flowers emerge, attracting active pollinators such as *Apis cerana*, *Apis dorsata*, and the butterfly *Danaus chrysippus*. By September to November, fruits start the cycle. Ecologically, the species is invaluable, its deep and robust root system firmly stabilizes riverbanks, canals, and water channels, making it a frontline defender against soil erosion. It is also integrated into agroforestry systems for its relatively fast growth and timber potential, and notably serves as a host plant for Tassar silkworms.

Growing naturally along rivers and irrigation channels, the Arjuna tree has long been part of traditional water landscapes in India. Villages and settlements often flourished under its shade near tanks and streams. The Neermaruthu therefore represents the ancient relationship between trees, water, and human settlement. The MLA Hostel, serves as accommodation for medical students and staff, and within this setting the venerable Neer Marudhu stands as a living testament to endurance.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



48. *Terminalia arjuna*

Location: *MLA Hostel, Near Shuttle ground*

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°06.861' N, 80°27.605' E

Near the Shuttle Ground within the MLA Hostel campus in Chennai stands a towering and time-honoured Terminalia arjuna, known in Tamil as நீர் மருது and widely called the Arjun Tree. Indigenous to the Indian subcontinent and belonging to the family Combretaceae, this magnificent evergreen reaches an extraordinary height of 41.6 metres with a girth of 394 cm, and is estimated to be over 200 years old according to Pandian and Parthasarathy 2017. Its imposing trunk, often supported by buttresses, rises with strength while drooping branchlets lend grace to its massive stature.

From April to July, small yellowish flowers emerge, attracting active pollinators such as Apis cerana, Apis dorsata, and the butterfly Danaus chrysippus. By September to November, fruits start the cycle. Ecologically, the species is invaluable, its deep and robust root system firmly stabilizes riverbanks, canals, and water channels, making it a frontline defender against soil erosion. It is also integrated into agroforestry systems for its relatively fast growth and timber potential, and notably serves as a host plant for Tassar silkworms.

The MLA Hostel, serves as accommodation for medical students and staff, and within this setting the venerable Neer Marudhu stands as a living testament to endurance. The Neermaruthu tree provides habitat and nourishment for many birds, insects, and small animals. Its flowers attract pollinators, and its large branches offer nesting and resting spaces for wildlife. The bark is rich in arjunic acid and flavonoids, strengthening cardiac muscles, lowering cholesterol, and improving blood circulation. It also treats fractures, asthma, skin issues.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
50% Healthy



49. *Terminalia phillyreifolia*

Location: Teacher Training Institute, Saidapet

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°02.135' N, 80°22.752' E

The venerable *Terminalia phillyreifolia*, Syn. *Anogeissus acuminata* (Tamil: வெள்ளை நமை; English: Button Tree), belonging to the family Combretaceae, is located within the historic Teacher Training Institute campus. With a girth of 455 cm and a height of 22 m, this indigenous deciduous species is estimated to be more than 200 years old (Suarabh Gupta and Rabikumar, 2010), marking it as one of the oldest living trees on the campus.

Flowering occurs from June to September, producing yellowish-green flowers in compact, ball-like clusters, primarily pollinated by honey bees and dipteran flies. Fruiting extends from August to December, bearing small, button-like or cone-shaped fruits; the seeds are winged, and wind-dispersed. Large native trees like Button tree, play an important role in improving urban environments. Their broad canopy provides shade, moderates heat, and enhances air quality in cities. Such trees contribute quietly to creating healthier and more liveable urban spaces.

Ecologically, the species plays a crucial role in afforestation and soil protection, especially in rocky and arid terrains, where it effectively binds soil and reduces erosion. It significantly supports biodiversity by providing habitat and food resources for various organisms.

Economically, the wood is moderately hard and durable and valued for tannin content. Used for construction, furniture, agricultural implements, and poles. The wood burns well and is commonly used as firewood and for charcoal making. Bark and leaves are used in traditional medicine for treating skin diseases, wounds, and digestive problems.





50. *Terminalia phillyreifolia*

Location: Medical corporation, Egmore

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°07.259' N, 80°25.999' E

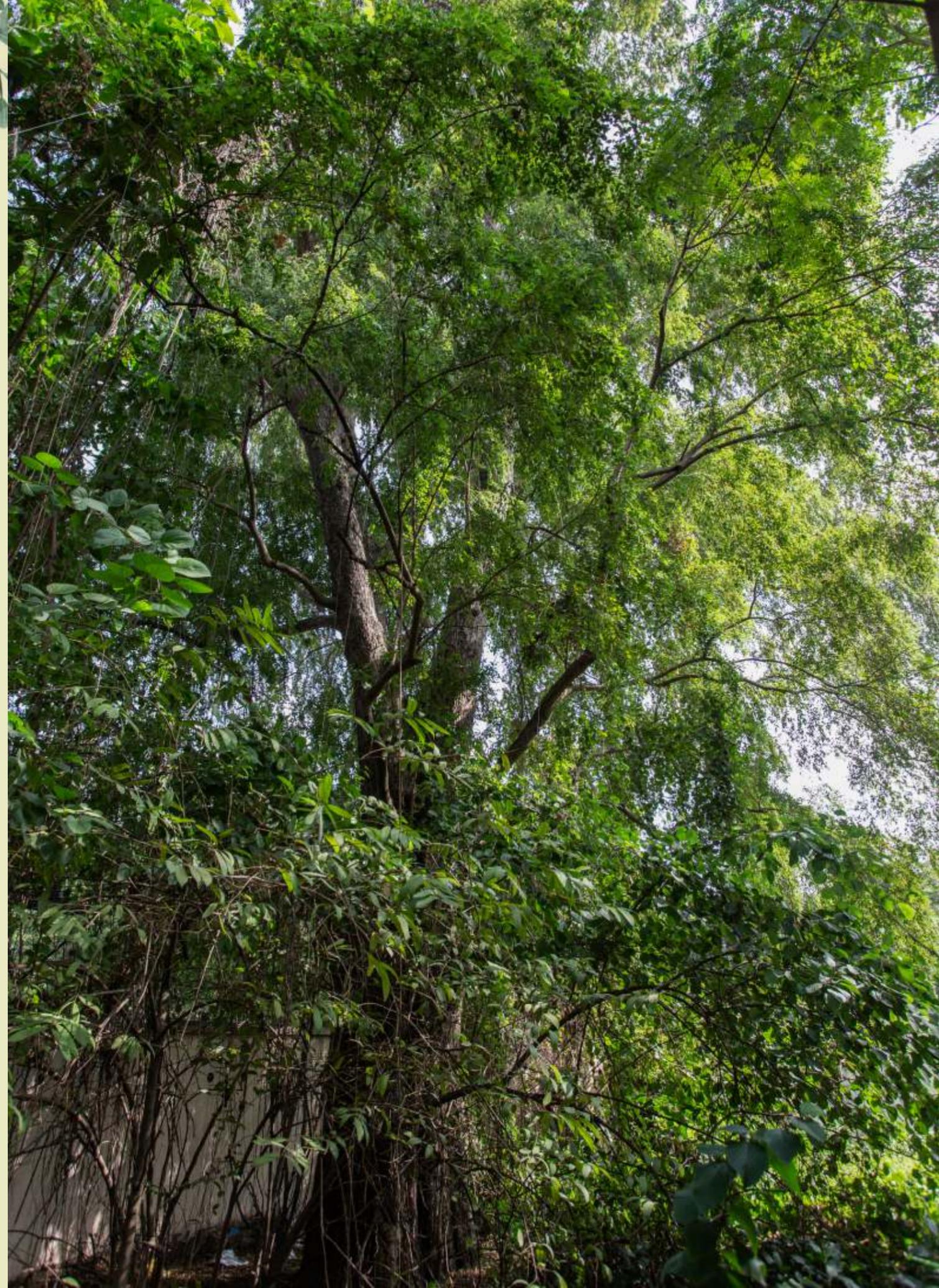
Amid the institutional landscape of Egmore, within the Medical Corporation campus, rises the stately, *Terminalia phillyreifolia*, Syn. *Anogeissus acuminata* (Tamil: வெள்ளை நமை; the Button Tree - an indigenous sentinel of the family Combretaceae. With an impressive girth of 385 cm and a commanding height of 28 m, this deciduous veteran is estimated to be more than 200 years old (Saurabh Gupta & Rabikumar, 2010).

From June to September, the tree bears yellowish-green, ball-like clusters of flowers that invite honey bees and dipteran flies, sustaining vital pollinator networks. By August through December, it produces small, fruits which are “button-like” or cone-shaped. As one of the traditional trees, this species represents the rich botanical heritage of the Indian landscape. Planted in avenues, campuses, and public spaces, it continues a long tradition of valuing large native shade trees in human settlements.

Ecologically, plays a pivotal role in afforestation and soil protection, thriving on rocky and arid terrains where few species persist. Its resilient root system binds fragile soils, curbing erosion, while its canopy and fruiting structures offer habitat and nourishment to diverse fauna, quietly reinforcing ecosystem stability.

Economically, it remains valued for durable timber and tannin extraction. Decoctions prepared from the bark are sometimes used to relieve stomach problems and indigestion. Plant extracts are believed to help reduce swelling and inflammation in traditional remedies. Some traditional practices use the plant because it may help control bacterial or fungal infections.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
80% Healthy



51. *Terminalia phillyreifolia*

Location: Egmore Museum

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°06.964' N, 80°25.736' E

Within the historic campus of Government Museum, Chennai stands a venerable specimen of *Terminalia phillyreifolia*, Syn. *Anogeissus acuminata* (Tamil: வெள்ளை நமை; and commonly called Button Tree. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Combretaceae, this medium sized deciduous tree measures 18 metres in height with a girth of 293 cm and is estimated to be between 173 and 211 years old as per Suarabh Gupta and Rabikumar 2010.

Flowering occurs from June to September, producing yellowish green flowers arranged in compact spherical clusters that attract honey bees and dipterian flies as major pollinators. Fruiting takes place between August and December. Tree has a straight trunk with a spreading crown. The bark is grey to brown and slightly rough, while the branches often grow horizontally forming a broad canopy. The spreading branches and seasonal fruits of *Terminalia* support birds, insects, and other urban wildlife. Even within cities, such native trees create small but important habitats. They remind us that biodiversity can thrive alongside human habitation.

Ecologically, the strong root system helps prevent soil erosion and stabilizes the soil. Leaf litter improves soil fertility and nutrient cycling in forest areas. Large canopy creates shade and maintains humidity in forest habitats. Economically, Wood is used for small construction works, poles, and agricultural implements. The wood is commonly used as firewood and for charcoal production. Bark and leaves are used in traditional medicine for wounds, skin diseases, and digestive problems.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
70% Healthy



52. *Terminalia phillyreifolia*

Location: Egmore Museum

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°06.964' N, 80°25.736' E

A venerable specimen of *Terminalia phillyreifolia*, Syn. *Anogeissus acuminata* stays within the historic campus of Government Museum, Chennai stands locally known as வெள்ளை நுழை and commonly called Axle wood or Button Tree. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Combretaceae, this medium sized deciduous tree measures 18 metres in height with a girth of 416 cm and is estimated to be >200 years old as per Suarabh Gupta and Rabikumar 2010.

The leaves are simple, leathery, and arranged alternately, usually clustered near the ends of branches. They are elliptic to oblong in shape with smooth margins and a glossy surface. Flowering occurs from June to September, producing yellowish green flowers arranged in compact spherical clusters that attract honey bees and dipteran flies as major pollinators. Fruiting takes place between August and December.

Ecologically, the species is highly effective in afforestation and soil protection, particularly in rocky and arid landscapes where it binds soil and reduces erosion, while also supporting biodiversity by providing habitat and food for various species. Herbal decoctions prepared from the bark are used in Ayurveda to relieve indigestion and stomach disorders. Plant extracts are used to reduce swelling and inflammation in traditional treatments. The plant is believed to have antibacterial and antifungal properties, helping to control infections

With its expansive canopy and dense foliage, helps reduce urban heat and creates cooler microclimates in streets and public spaces. Trees like this play a vital role in making cities more climate-resilient and comfortable for people. Economically, it is valued for its strong timber and tannin.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
80% Healthy



53. *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*

Location: Theosophical Society

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.028' N, 80°25.985' E

*Within the serene campus of The Theosophical Society stands an imposing specimen of *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, locally known as யானைக் காது மரம் and widely called the Elephant Ear Tree. Native to Central and South America and belonging to the family Fabaceae, this fast-growing deciduous tropical tree rises to 32 metres in height with a remarkable girth of 520 cm and is estimated to be between 189 and 232 years old as per Tamilselvan et al., 2021. It is a massive, fast-growing deciduous tree known for its broad, umbrella-shaped canopy. The trunk is thick and often buttressed at the base.*

The leaves are bipinnate (feathery), fern-like appearance. The tree produces small, greenish-white flowers in March to May and fruiting occurs in June to February. Its most distinctive feature is its large, circular, coiled seed pods that resemble elephant's ear — which is why it is commonly called the “Ear Tree.” Ecologically, Provides extensive shade due to its wide canopy. Being a leguminous tree, it helps improve soil fertility through nitrogen fixation. Offers habitat and food for birds, insects, and small mammals.

Because of its enormous spreading crown, a single mature tree can shade a very large area, making it a popular avenue and park tree in tropical climates. Set within the historic Adyar headquarters of the Theosophical Society—founded in 1875 and known for promoting universal brotherhood and scholarly inquiry—this extraordinary tree reflects both botanical curiosity and global cultural exchange rooted in Chennai's green heritage.



54. *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*

Location: Theosophical Society

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.044' N, 80°25.932' E

Commanding attention within the expansive grounds of The Theosophical Society, *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, locally known as யானைக் காது மரம் and widely called the Elephant Ear Tree. Native to Central and South America and belonging to the family Fabaceae, this fast-growing deciduous tropical tree rises to 25.6 metres in height with a remarkable girth of 410 cm and is estimated to be between 189 and 232 years old as per Tamilselvan et al., 2021. It is a massive, fast-growing deciduous tree known for its broad, umbrella-shaped canopy. The trunk is thick and often buttressed at the base.

The leaves are bipinnate (feathery), fern-like appearance. The tree produces small, greenish-white flowers in March to May and fruiting occurs in June to February. Its most distinctive feature is its large, circular, coiled seed pods that resemble elephant's ear — which is why it is commonly called the “Ear Tree.”

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55. *Lannea coromandalica*

Location: St. George Anglo Indian School, EVR Road, Shenoy Nagar

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°07.835' N, 80°25.553' E

Within the historic grounds of St. George's Anglo-Indian Higher Secondary School thrives a venerable specimen of Lannea coromandelica, locally known as ஒதியன் and commonly called the Indian Ash Tree. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Anacardiaceae, this deciduous medium-sized tree reaches about 15 metres in height with a girth of 304 cm and is estimated to be over 200 years old as per Pandian and Parthasarathy, 2017.

Flowering occurs from March to May, producing yellowish-green clusters at the ends of branchlets, with male and female flowers borne separately. Bees, flies and butterflies serve as its major pollinators. Fruiting extends from May to October, yielding olive-shaped fruits enclosing a single hard stone seed. The species adapts well to dry tropical conditions and regenerates easily, especially through branch cuttings.

Ecologically, Lannea coromandelica is widely used as a hedge and windbreak, commonly planted as a live fence in agroforestry systems, where it aids soil conservation and land management. Economically, it holds importance for its medicinal uses and for its wood, which is utilized in furniture making and incense stick production. Standing within one of India's oldest educational institutions, founded in 1715, the enduring Lannea reflects resilience, utility and the deep interconnection between natural and cultural heritage in Chennai.

ERT based Tree Health Index:
100% Healthy



56. *Barringtonia acutangula*

Location: Theosophical Society

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.156' N, 80°26.397' E

Along the quiet water edges of The Theosophical Society rises the enduring form of *Barringtonia acutangula*, known in Tamil as செங்கடம்பு and in English as the Fresh Water Mangrove. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Lecythidaceae, this medium sized deciduous tree stands 16 metres tall with a girth of 240 cm and is estimated to be over 200 years old as recorded by Pandian and Parthasarathy, 2017.

The fruits are oval and four-angled, turning green to reddish when mature. From March to July, flowers appear and pollinated by bats, bees, and moths, the blossoms reinforce intricate ecological relationships within wetland habitats. Fruiting occurs from June to August, producing fruits.

Ecologically, *Barringtonia acutangula* plays a vital role in soil stabilization and erosion control, with its strong root system binding riverbanks and wetland soils. Helps maintain wetland ecosystem stability. It acts as a keystone species in floodplain ecosystems, offering shade, fallen organic matter as food, and habitat for fish, birds and aquatic life. Economically, it serves as a valuable multipurpose tree providing timber and other uses.



57. *Butea monosperma*

Location: Theosophical Society

GPS Co-ordinates: 13°01.075' N, 80°26.213' E

Blazing like a living ember in the historic landscape of The Theosophical Society stands *Butea monosperma*, affectionately known in Tamil as புரசுர முருக்கு and celebrated in English as the Flame of the Forest. Indigenous to India and belonging to the family Leguminosae, this medium sized deciduous tree rises to about 16 metres with a girth of 315 cm and carries an estimated age range of 173 to 212 years as recorded by Devaranavadgi et al., 2013.

February to April, the tree bursts into clusters of brilliant orange scarlet blossoms. Each flower is distinctly curved beak shaped keel, resembling a parrot's beak. Fruiting follows from March to July. Ecologically, *Butea* is a keystone species supporting biodiversity. Economically, it yields the rich red gum known as Bengal Kino, provides natural dye, and supports lac cultivation. The tree also finds poetic immortality in Sangam literature:

“குவிமுகை முருக்கின் கூர்நுனை வைஎயிற்று
நகை முகமகளிர் ஊட்டு உகிர் கடுக்கும்” - அகநானூறு 317:4-5

The poet beautifully compares the Murukku flower to a red-faced blossom freshly emerging from its tender stalk, vividly capturing the splendour of nature.



Butea monosperma

Location: Gangadeshwarar temple,
Purasaiwakam





Azadirachta indica
Location: IIT Ground

