

## Plant Profile: *Tamarindus indica* L.

**Scientific name** *Tamarindus indica* L..

**Family** Caesalpiniaceae

**Common names:** In India it is known by several names Hindi: Imli, Bengali: Amli, Kannada: Hunise, Hunase, Hunuse, Hunasi, Hulise, Manipuri: Mange, Sanskrit: Chinchaa, Tintrini, Tamil: Puli. Telugu: Chinta, Marathi: Chinch, Mizo: Tengtere

**Habitat** Tamarind is highly wind-resistant tree, with strong, supple branches, gracefully drooping at the ends, and has dark-gray, rough, fissured bark. It is grown unattended in backyards, roadsides or wastelands<sup>2</sup>. It is suited for avenue plantings as a roadside tree, in and around villages as multipurpose trees for agroforestry systems or as fire breaks for forest margins. It is a valuable timber species used in making furniture, tool handles, charcoal, rice pounders and fuel wood.

### Plant Description

Tamarind is a very common large tree with a short massive trunk, ferny pinnate leaves, small yellow flowers and fat reddish brown pods. The tree can get 90 ft tall but is usually less than 50 ft. It has a short, stocky trunk, drooping branches and a domed umbrella shaped crown about as wide as the tree's height. The leaves are about 10 in long with 10-18 pairs of 1 in oblong leaflets. Tamarind drops its leaves in pronounced dry seasons; in climates without a dry season it stays evergreen. The flowers are about 1 in across, pale yellow with purple or red veins. They have five unequal lobes and borne in small drooping clusters. The velvety cinnamon brown pods are 2-6 in long, sausage shaped and constricted between the seeds. The pulp that surrounds the 8-10 seeds is both sweet and extremely sour.

### Chemical Composition:

Tamarind is high in many nutrients. A single cup (120 grams) of the pulp contains Magnesium: 26%, Potassium: 16%, Iron: 19%, Calcium: 7% , Phosphorus: 11% Copper: 11%, Vitamin B1 (thiamin): 43%, Vitamin B2 (riboflavin): 14%, Vitamin B3 (niacin): 15%, It has trace amounts of: vitamin C, vitamin K, vitamin B6 (pyridoxine), folate, vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid), selenium  
It also contains 6 grams of fiber, 3 grams of protein, and less than 1 gram of fat. This comes with a total of 287 calories.

**Medicinal Uses** Tamarind contains ingredients that might have laxative effects and some activity against certain fungi and bacteria.

Researchers are studying tamarind as a possible treatment for dry eyes because it contains a chemical that is similar to mucin found in the eye. Mucin helps protect and wet the surface of the cornea.

### Helps in weight loss

Tamarind is rich in fibre and has no fat content. Studies suggest that eating tamarind daily might actually help in weight reduction since it contains flavonoids and polyphenols.

### Prevents peptic ulcers

Peptic ulcers can be very painful. These are basically sores that appear in the inner lining of the stomach and small intestine. Thanks to the polyphenolic compounds found in tamarind, this fruit can [prevent these ulcers](#).

### Effective in managing diabetes

Tamarind seed extracts are anti-inflammatory in nature and they are even said to stabilize blood sugar levels and reverse the damage of the pancreatic tissue in those suffering from [diabetes](#). The enzyme alpha-amylase which is proven to reduce blood sugar levels can also be found in tamarind.

### Helps with digestion

Tamarind has been used since ancient times as a laxative because of its tartaric acid, malic acid, and potassium content. Its ability to relax abdominal muscles is why it is also used as a remedy for [diarrhoea](#). So, while the fruit is used to relieve constipation, the leaves provide treatment from diarrhoea, and the root and bark can be consumed to alleviate abdominal pain.

### Aids a healthy heart

Tamarind is a very heart-friendly fruit. Flavonoids present in tamarind lower LDL or “bad” cholesterol and raise HDL or “good” cholesterol levels, thus preventing the build-up of triglycerides (a type of fat) in the blood. It also has high potassium content which can help keep your blood pressure in check.

### Takes care of your liver

It turns out that [tamarind can take care of your liver](#) as well. A diet rich in calories leads to a fatty liver and studies suggest that daily consumption of tamarind extracts can reverse this condition.

### It can help you deal with allergies

It is an effective way to deal with allergic asthma and cough because of its antihistaminic properties. It's also a rich source of vitamin C and can boost the immune system to prevent cold and cough.

