



Palmyra Palm Trees

[Source: DTE](#)

Odisha has restricted the felling of **Palmyra palm trees** due to their **ecological and social benefits**.

Palmyra Palm Tree (*Borassus flabellifer*)

- **About:** It is **indigenous to South and Southeast Asia**, highly drought-resistant and recognised as the **State Tree of Tamil Nadu**.
 - It is found mainly in **Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu**.
 - It is revered in **Tamil culture** as *Karpaga Vruksham* (“**celestial tree that gives everything**”), and its **palm leaf manuscripts** were vital in preserving **Tamil language and literature** for centuries.
- **Ecological Role:** Its fruits (**tala**) ripen in **July-August**, serving as **food for elephants during lean seasons** and reducing [human-elephant conflicts](#), its **tall structure acts as a natural lightning conductor**, lowering monsoon fatalities.
 - Its **deep root system** aids **groundwater recharge, drought resilience, and soil erosion prevention** along water bodies and coasts.
- **Significance:** Its fruit kernel (**nungu**) serves as a **mineral-rich summer coolant**, while **palm sugar (panai karuppatti) & jaggery**, and beverages like **padaneer (sap)** and **toddy** offer **healthier traditional alternatives** to modern products.
 - **Leaves** support **roofing, mats, and handicrafts**, and its **wood** provides **construction material and fuel**.

WHAT MAKES THE PALMYRA SPECIAL?



- Palmyra trees live for more than a century, and are drought-resistant, making them perfect for TN weather conditions
- They tend to reduce the impact of floods and cyclones; a survey of trees after Cyclone Gaja revealed that the one of the only trees that weathered the storm was the palmyra, owing to the structure of the trunk that makes it both sturdy and flexible

- The tree's root system, though fibrous, spread far and deep round the base of the trunk helps regulate the underground water table

ROOT TO STEM, THE GIVING TREE

1 palmyra tree |

180 litres of tender palm water, 25kg of palm jaggery, 10kg firewood and 20kg palm fibre a year

- Every part of the tree is useful

Root | For its medicinal properties as well as to make baskets and brushes

Trunk | Used for scaffolding

Leaves (olai) | In weaving cots and chairs

Fruit | Can be eaten fresh as nungu or the overripe fruits can be charred in a tandoor

Palmyra tubers or sprouts |

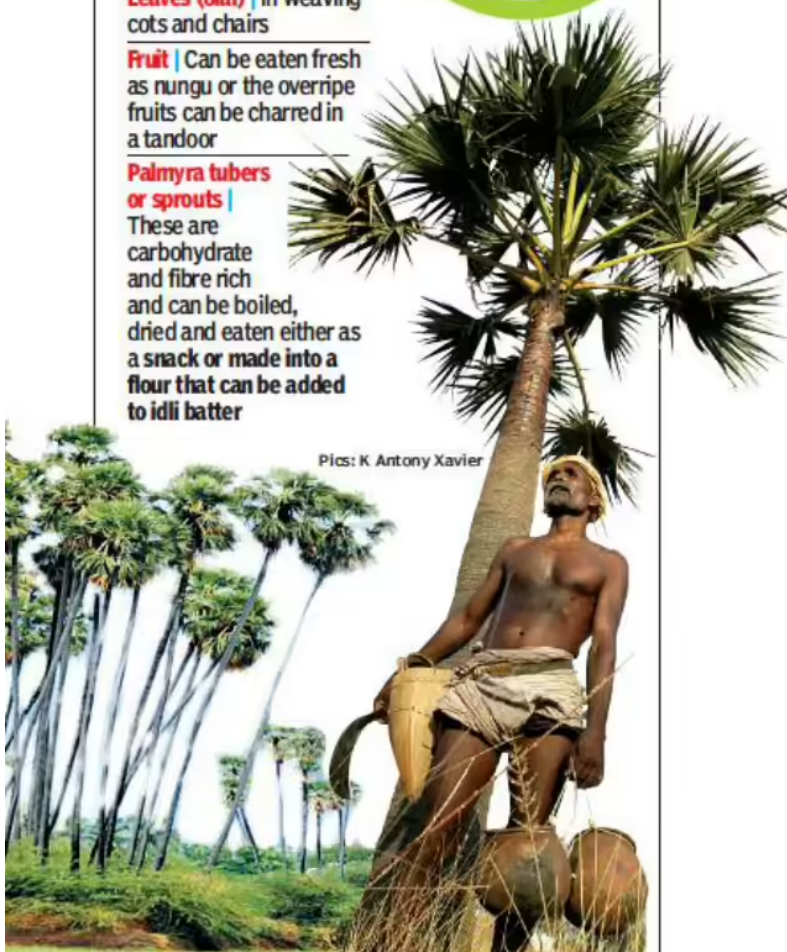
These are carbohydrate and fibre rich and can be boiled, dried and eaten either as a snack or made into a flour that can be added to idli batter



UNPREDIC



Pics: K Antony Xavier



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