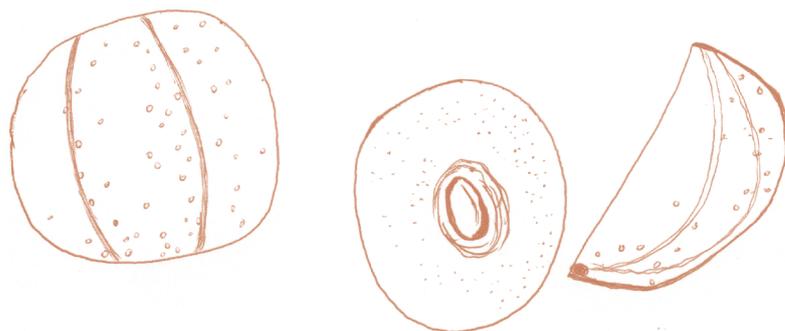


nelli

a collection of
favourite amla
indian gooseberry
recipes from the
malnad and other
regions of India



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Vanastree, meaning *Women of the Forest* in Kannada, is a small collective dedicated to promoting forest garden biodiversity and food security through the conservation of traditional seeds.



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nelli, a background



Amla needs no introduction

Amla is a gift of nature to mankind. Amla, also called nelli or Indian gooseberry (*Phyllanthus emblica*), is truly the Mother of Herbs. It has been said that what gold is to metals, amla is to herbs.

Because of its extraordinary medicinal qualities, amla is an indispensable part of the Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine. All of our ancient Indian texts have extolled its preventive, restorative and curative properties. The fruit is mentioned in the Jaiminiya Upanishad, Chandogya Upanishad, Kurma Purana, Sangraha Purana and many other ancient Indian medicinal texts.

The fresh fruit is more than 80 percent water and contains protein, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates and fibre. **Amla is one of the richest natural sources of vitamin C (445 mg/100 g)**. Amla juice is reported to contain nearly 20 times as much vitamin C as orange juice. Even if boiled, dried or powdered, amla retains much of its vitamin C. Besides vitamin C, amla also contains calcium, phosphorus, iron, carotene and vitamin B complex.

The many names of amla

Amla by any other name tastes just as sour-sweet ... and is just as effective!

Common name: Amla, Indian gooseberry

Botanical name: *Phyllanthus emblica*,

Synonym: *Emblica officinalis*

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Sanskrit: Dhatri, Amalaka, Amalaki;

Prakrut: Amalaya, Amalai;

Hindi: Aonla, Amla;

Kannada: Bettada Nelli, Nellikai;

Tamil: Nelli;

Malayalam: Nelli Maram, Nellikka;

Telugu: Usiri, Usirikaya;

Marathi: Awala;

Konkani: Aavalo;

Gujarati: Ambala;

Punjabi: Avla; Oriya: Aonla;

Assamese: Amlakhi;

Arabic: Amlaj;

Persian: Amala

About the plant

The English name of amla - Indian gooseberry - indicates that it is indigenous to India. A medium-sized (8-18m) deciduous tree, it grows wild in wet forests of hilly areas throughout India. Amla is a hardy tree, and thus can also be found in arid and semiarid soils.

OTHER SPECIES RELATED TO AMLA

Otaheite gooseberry

(*Phyllanthus distichus*, synonym: *Cicca disticha*, *Cicca acida* L.) Known in Sanskrit as Lavani, in the south as Aranelli and in Hindi as Harfi or Harphori, this species is related to amla but has deeply lobed and sour fruit. These fruits grow in profuse clusters along the main branches. It can be eaten raw, cooked, pickled, or preserved as jam. In southern India, home gardeners usually cultivate it for its fruits.

Bhui amla, Keera nelli,

(*Phyllanthus amarus*, synonym: *nirui auct. Non. L.*) Known in Sanskrit as Bahupatra, in the south as Bhui amla or Kera nelli gida, and in Hindi as Jaramal. This small shrub-like amla plant grows wild along the ground and bears small, round fruit on the rear side of its leaf. The whole plant is used in traditional medicine to successfully cure jaundice.

There are two varieties of Amla - wild (*vanya*) and cultivated (*gramya*). The fruit of wild amla is small, hard and very fibrous while cultivated amla is larger, smoother and juicier. The tree is extensively cultivated all over India. However the cultivated and grafted fruits are not as potent nor medicinal as the smaller wild variant.

Cultivation and harvesting

For some people, growing Amla is such a passion that they have devoted their entire life to it. Chandrakanth Barhatte is a farmer from Punthamba (Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra). He has a 40 acre farm where he grows all possible varieties of amla. He loves experimenting with different amla recipes, and every year he hosts a feast in his amla orchard where the entire range of dishes served are prepared from amla! He has even compiled a book of amla recipes in Marathi.

It is people like Barhatte and millions of others who have helped keep amla alive over the millennia by carefully cultivating and using it. They are the unsung heroes and heroines who have made it possible for us to have access to this wonderful fruit.

Amla is an important non-timber forest product (NTFP), as well as a cultivated tree. Some communities like the Soliga tribes of the Biligiri Rangan Hills in Karnataka earn as much as 60% of their cash income from harvesting and selling amla. In Uttara Kannada, too, local communities collect, use and sell amla and amla products. Sadly, the number of amla trees has been steadily declining. This is due to forest clearing, forest fires, overgrazing by cattle, and destructive harvesting practices. Just to get one year's harvest, people often cut the entire tree or all the branches. Without sound natural resource management in place, the current lack of education and limited foresight of such harvesting practices will contribute to the destruction of the amla tree, thus reducing amla yields year after year.

The cultivated amla tree matures after about 4-5 years of planting. The fruits are harvested between December and February when they change from light green to a dull greenish-yellow. A mature amla tree of about 10 years will yield approximately 50-70 kg of fruit. If well maintained, an amla tree will bear fruit up to an age of 70 years.

As a reader of this little booklet, we hope you enjoy the recipes given here and the

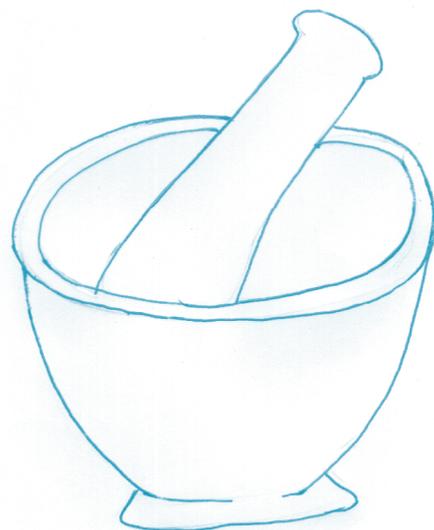
good health that they naturally bring. But more importantly, we also urge you to be responsible and plant amla trees in your garden, orchards, or in the forest or common lands. Contact your local Forest nursery or other sources for amla saplings. Please also ensure that you, your family and community harvest the amla fruit in a sustainable way so that you enjoy its goodness for a long time to come. Each one of you can play a role in protecting and using amla for generations to come.

Medicinal and other uses of amla

Power-packed amla

Amla's reputation is one of universal health-giving. In Ayurveda, the Indian gooseberry is called "*sarvadosha hara*" - a remover of all diseases. Since amla pacifies all the three *doshas* (body types) - *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* - it has a wide range of corrective and therapeutic effects on the human body, promoting excellent health. Amla is also known as "*amritphala*" in Sanskrit, which literally means the fruit of heaven or fruit of immortality. Charaka has specifically mentioned amla as the greatest "*rasayana*". Since it contains all the *rasas*, it keeps away all degenerative processes, prevents aging and is said to impart immortality.

Amla can be found in several powerful traditional Indian medicines. *Chyawanprash*, which has been used and treasured in India for thousands of years, is foremost among all *rasayana* tonic formulations. It consists of forty seven ingredients, of which amla is the main additive. Amla is an important ingredient in *Triphala*, another well-known laxative in Ayurveda and also the primary component in the Unani formulation *Jawarish-e-amlam*. All parts of the plant are used in various Ayurvedic herbal preparations, including the fruit, seed, leaves, root, bark and flowers.



Amla uses from head to toe

THE USEFUL AMLA TREE

Traditional medicinal uses of amla by the Unani Hakim or practitioner:

Amla bark:

- For an effective antidote against a scorpion sting, mix amla bark with the juice of an onion.
- Fresh bark paste combined with honey and turmeric can treat gonorrhoea.

Amla leaves and flowers:

- Tender green shoots given in buttermilk cure indigestion and diarrhoea.
- Amla leaves infused with fenugreek (methi) seeds are taken as a bitter tonic for chronic dysentery.
- Roasted flowers and leaves are fomented to relieve urine retention.

Amla seeds:

- Amla seed infusion is a good remedy for biliousness, vomiting, diabetes and smallpox.
- An infusion of amla seeds is used to alleviate eyestrain caused by sun glare.

Amla root:

- Similar to the astringent extract of catechu, amla root is used for medicinal purposes as an infusion for indigestion and colic.

Source: Medicinal Secrets of your Food by Dr Aman, Unani Hakim / practitioner from Mysore

Quick tips from Dr G.S. Savithri, Ayurvedic Vaidya (practitioner) from Sirsi. The sole use of amla for specific ailments should not replace your own doctor's advice or any other medical recommendation. The amla remedies provided here is for general information purposes only.

Memory booster: Take amla crushed with honey on an empty stomach.

EYES

Tonic, eye wash, antiseptic: Boil amla powder and coriander seeds in a cup of water, simmer until reduced. Cool and soak a clean cloth and clean eyes. This will prevent eye infections from spreading.

Improved vision: Regular ingestion of amla is strongly recommended for computer professionals or office workers who have mild eye strain.

Face cleaner, scar remover: Combine amla with turmeric and sandalwood to make a face pack.

Nasal allergies: Amla builds up immunity of the mucous membrane, preventing allergies and sneezing due to pollution.

DENTAL CARE

Toothpowder: Mix a powder of dry amla, cloves, salt and camphor, jeshthamadh (optional for flavour). Prevents gum bleeding, tooth decay and pyorrhoea.

Toothache: Combine 1 pinch triphala, 1 drop ghee, 1 pepper corn, 1 pinch camphor. Cover with cotton and use as a plug on the infected tooth.

Chest and throat infections:

Sore throat: Make a gargle decoction with triphala and amla powder.

Pharyngitis: Combine 1 cup rice wash water (unpolished rice preferred), with 1 tsp amla powder and use to replace drinking water with food.

Chest congestion: Take a spoonful of *Chyawanprash* or amla instead of evening snacks or at night with dinner. Very effective for young children.

Stomach intergestion: Acidity controller "*pitha vihara*": Mix solid jaggery / bella with amla powder and take on empty stomach. Use amla with food (eg. with buttermilk), or use dry or wet hindi (see recipe section).

Liver strengthener: Take fresh amla juice in the early morning or with food to remove toxins.

Pancreas: Amla is a wonder drug for diabetes: Have fresh amla juice in the early morning or after dinner. Mix amla powder, haldi and amrutavalli powder with honey and take on an empty stomach.

HEART HEALTH

Heart tonic: Amla tones up heart muscles.

TRADITIONAL NON-MEDICINAL USES OF AMLA:

- Amla root infusion is used as colouring agent in the arts.
- Amla is used in the preparation of writing inks and dyes. The leaves, along with the bark, are both rich in tannin and used for tanning and dyeing.
- Chips of the amla tree bark or small branches placed into muddied water helps purify and clear it.
- Traditional hair and skin care formulations using amla known as kantivartaka, bring back lustre and health to the hair and skin. For premature greying or hair thinning, amla has been traditionally used as an active ingredient in hair oil. In shampoo, it is considered to strengthen and lengthen hair, and as a general cooling agent. Amla can be used as a hair dye or darkener by grinding amla with henna for a good colour. Take amla in any form, preferably along with night food as a hair root nourisher.

Palpitations: Take amla in any form after breakfast.

Colitis, inflammation of intestines, abdominal pain, passing mucous with stools: Take amla hindi or powder with warm rice and butter and avoid all other foods.

Leucorrhoea / white discharge: Powder amla seeds and take with rice wash water before food.

Vaginal infections: Use amla as an antiseptic wash.

Wounds and cuts: Sprinkle with charred amla seed powder. In an iron vessel heat amla seeds, cover with a lid. Allow seeds to char. When smoke stops, take off the fire, cool and grind into a powder. For old wounds, amla can be applied mixed with oil.



Amla myths & legends

There are profuse references to amla in various ancient Indian texts, in oral folklore and in common idiomatic language. Some examples collected here illustrate how amla has been an indispensable part of daily life and rituals throughout the ages. There are many tastes (*rasas*) of amla. The prominent taste is sourness (*amla*), the fruit is also astringent (*kashaya*), sweet (*madhura*), bitter (*tikta*) and pungent (*katu*) all at once! The only taste you cannot put on your tongue after eating amla is saltiness (*lavanna*).

Many languages have proverbs that refer to the characteristic taste of amla:

*“The words of elders are like the gooseberry,
they taste bitter at first, but sweet later.”*

*“Moothorade vaaku amlakka, aadyam
kayakkum pinne madhurikkyum.” (Mayalayalam)*

*“Avale da khada, te budde da kiha badh
vich mitha lagda hai.” (Punjabi)*

Hindu mythology tells us that in the aeons gone by, the whole earth was submerged in water, and Lord Brahma was immersed in the meditation of the Almighty Parabrahma. He became so full of emotion that tears started rolling down from his eyes and fell on the earth. The amla tree is said to have germinated from those tears. (Padma purana, Uthrakanda, 47. 7-11). Since the amla tree was the first tree to manifest itself on the earth, it is also known as “Adiroha,” or the pre-eminent tree.



The amla tree is mostly associated with Shiva and Vishnu, however, and it is also the sacred tree of Lord Murugan at Swamimalai in Tanjavur district of Tamil Nadu. The Swamimalai temple is one of the six abodes of Lord Murugan. Here, he is seen in the form of a teacher and the great lord Shiva is his humble and obedient student. The *sthal vriksha*, the sacred tree-in-residence where scholarly discussions were held at this temple, is actually the amla. The *sthalapurana* of the temple says that this tree is to be planted on the southern side of the temple. *Sthala vrikshas* or sacred trees are found all over in India. Almost every temple is associated with a plant or tree connected to the history and mythology of the temple and its deity. Source: Sacred Trees in Murukan temples Mrs V Balambal, Senior fellow, ICHR. Amirthalingam, M., "Sacred Trees of Tamilnadu"

The benefits of the amla tree and amla fruit have also been described by sage Vyasa as thus:

The virtues attained by seeing the amla tree are twice that received from donating a cow.

The performance of 'Pindadana' under amla trees gives salvation to the souls of dead ancestors.

Ghosts and other evil spirits do not trouble a house where amla fruits are kept.

One who is desirous of acquiring wealth should have a daily bath with water mixed with the juice of amla fruits.

A person who washes his hair with the juice of amla mixed with water, attains 'Vishnuloka' by destroying all his sins of this Kaliyuga.

A person who has his food under an amla tree in the Hindu month of Kartik, becomes free from the defects of the food (annadosha) for one year.

Thus, Sage Vyasa states in the "Skanda Purana" that all efforts should be made to preserve the amla tree.



In other traditional Hindu scriptures and accordances, amla is revered in so many ways:

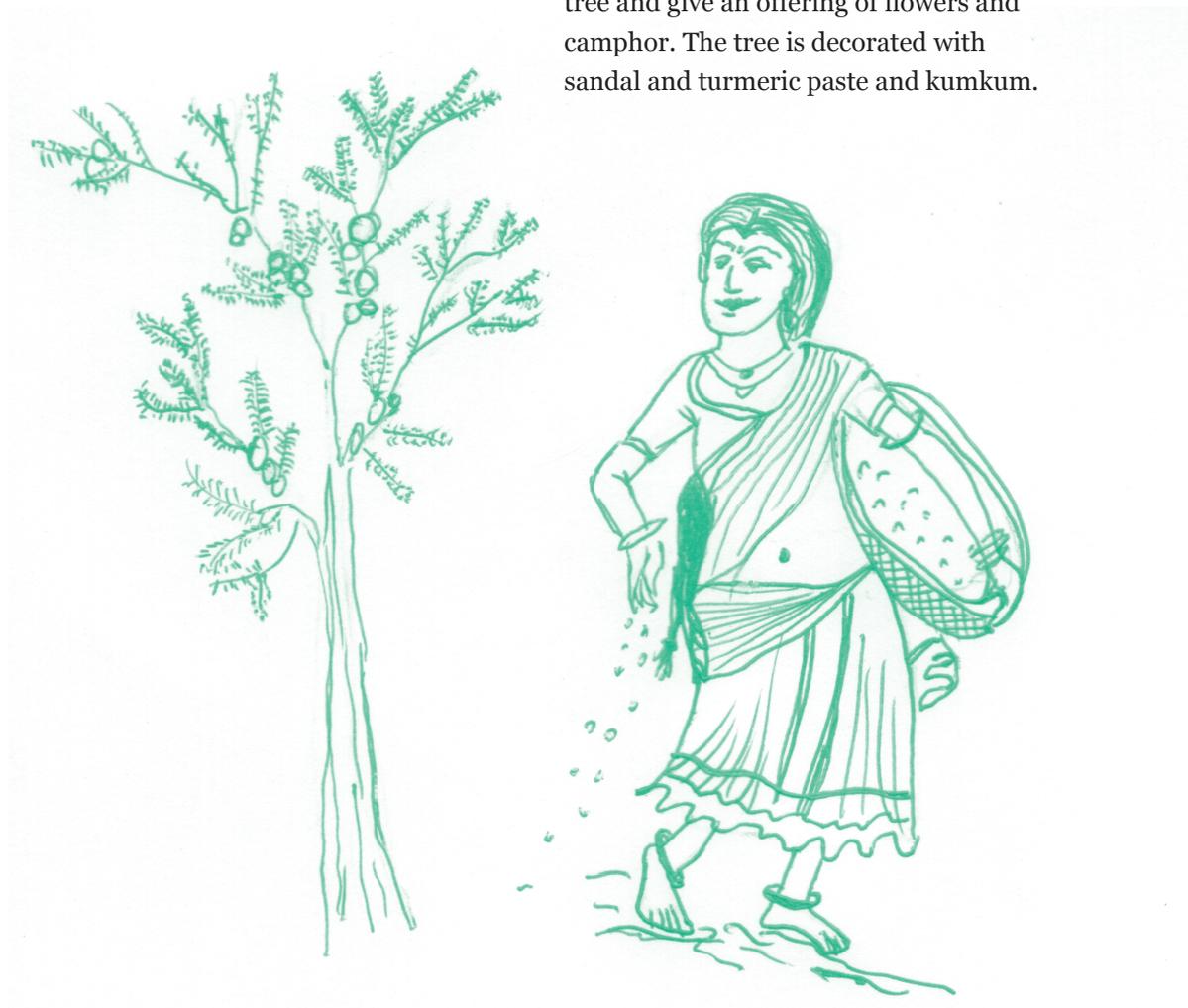
The Kanakadhara Sthothra chanted by Adisankara refers to all the riches brought to a poor woman who gave a gooseberry to Sankara.

Amla is also depicted in the bas-relief of the Stupa at Sanchi.

Goddess Lakshmi is said to reside in the amla fruit, making the fruit a symbol of wealth and prosperity.

In the Kartik Poornima the marriage of Tulsi is celebrated. Amla branches are planted in the *tulasi katta* or *tulasi brindavan* and evening puja is performed.

Amla is also associated with fertility. Women tie red and yellow threads to the amla tree and remove the thread after their wishes are fulfilled. Those who aspire for a son tie a cradle to the tree and give an offering of flowers and camphor. The tree is decorated with sandal and turmeric paste and kumkum.



Folktales about amla

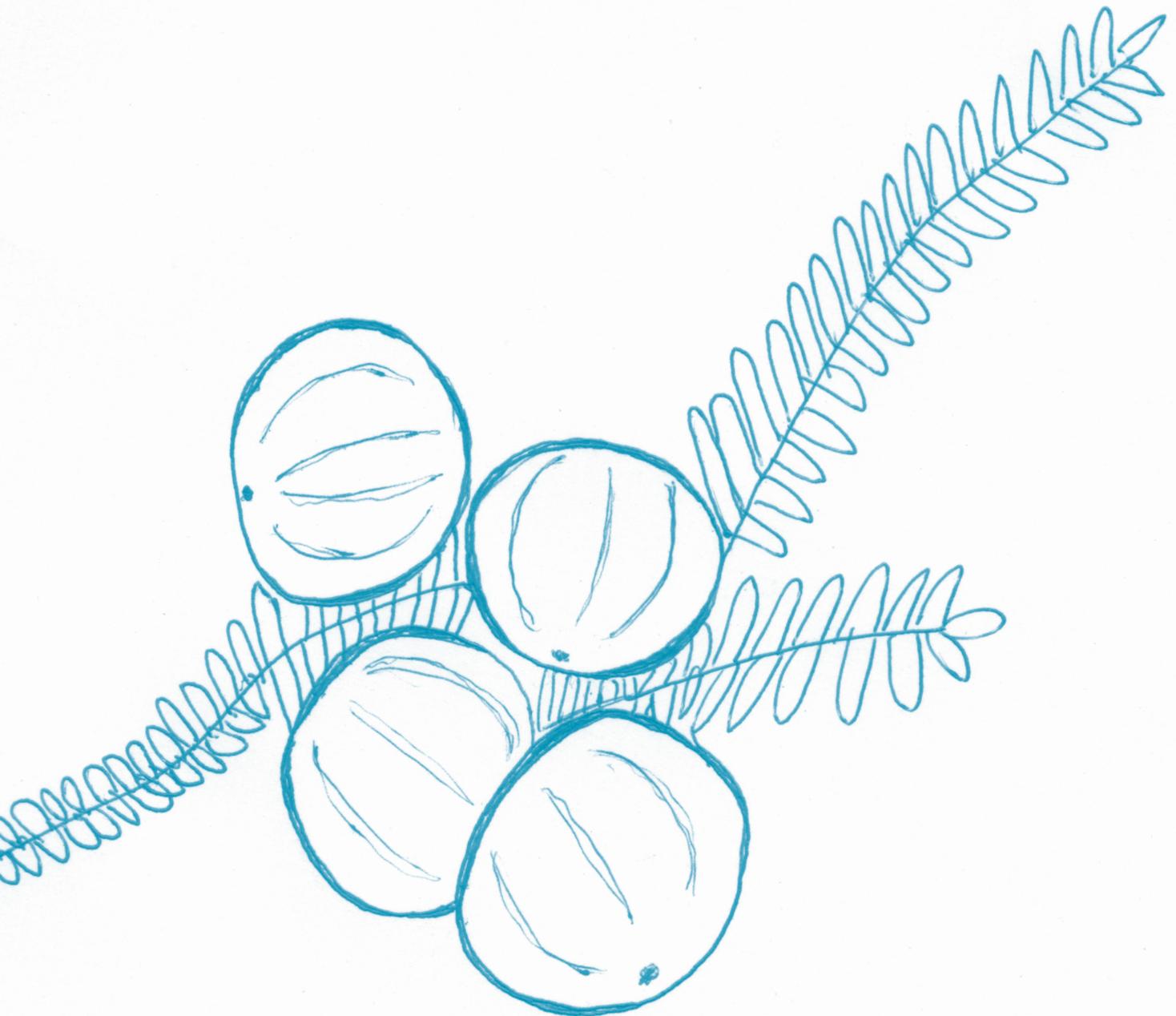
Several folktales describe the unique property of amla in making water sweet to taste.

A folktale from Mangalore: Pedda was an odd job boy who worked for a large household. He was once asked by his mistress to deliver a jar of freshly extracted coconut oil to her sister's house at the other end of the village. Trudging along in the sun with the jar on his head, Pedda spied ripe amla fruits fallen under the tree, near the village well. He ate his fill of amla and then drank water from the well. Pedda was astonished to find the well water tasting very sweet. He knew fully well that nobody would believe him if he said that the well water was sweet, and therefore decided to take proof of this astounding discovery back home. He emptied the jar of oil on the ground and refilled the pot with well-water...not knowing that water always tastes sweet after eating gooseberries ...and not realising what fate awaited him at home!

A folktale from the Kumaon Hills of the Himalayas: A Dalit (lower-caste) man walking in the forest ate some gooseberries from a tree. Wandering, he passed a *naula* (traditional water spring) belonging to the upper-castes. Very thirsty and seeing no one around, he surreptitiously drank some water. (Dalits were never allowed to draw or drink water from the wells used by upper caste people). To his surprise he found the well-water very sweet! He exclaimed to himself, "No wonder we Dalits are never allowed to access such sweet water!"



nelli, the recipes



A collection of favourite amla recipes from the malnad and other regions of india

We present here a selection of recipes that the members and friends of Vanastree have made, enjoyed and shared with each other. Some are from other places, such as Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamilnadu. We have used bettada nelli (wild amla) from our forest gardens for all recipes since it is widely available here in the Malnad. Wild amla is reputed to have higher medicinal properties than the hybrid cultivated varieties Banaras or Allahabad.

Preserving the fruit

I AMLA POWDER

Ingredients:

Fresh amla

Method: Dry whole amla fruits in the sun for 2-3 days. Cut into large pieces, remove seeds and dry out completely in the sun for 2-3 additional days. Grind in a mixer or pound finely. Store the powder in dry, airtight containers. Amla powder preserves well for at least one year. The powder can be used whenever needed, mixed with salt and other spices (see recipes below).

Use: For stomach acidity problems, have a spoonful with a little warm water every night or first thing in the morning on an empty stomach.

2 SALTED AMLA *Recipe courtesy of Minti Jain, Bangalore*

Ingredients:

1 kg Amla

200 g Salt

Method: Cut the raw amla fruit like a mango to get two circular cheek-like pieces and two rectangular side pieces. Cutting the amla this way ensures that the end product isn't too hard on the teeth!

Put the cut pieces into a container (choose the container with care, as amla is acidic and in combination with salt will corrode many metals). Add salt and leave for 3 days so the salt will soak into the fruits thoroughly. Stir 3-4 times a day with a dry spoon. After salting, spread the fruits out onto a large thick plastic sheet and keep in the sun until completely dry. The fruits will shrivel up and become hard and brittle. Cool and store in dry, airtight containers.

Use: Used as a base for pickles and chutney; can also be mixed with rice and eaten.

3 AMLA PRESERVED IN BRINE *This is an old, traditional way of preserving amla.*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg

Salt: 500 g

Water: 1 L

Method: Wash and dry the amla fruit. Boil water and salt to make a brine solution. Two minutes before removing from heat, add amla fruit. Cool the mixture and store in jars or bottles.

Use: The amla can be eaten as it is, or used throughout the year for chutneys, pickles, etc.

9 AMLA HINDI 2 (PUREE) *Recipe courtesy of Kamala, Neernalli*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
Salt: 250 g

Method: Cut amla into pieces, and remove and discard seeds. Grind to a paste on the grindstone or in a mixer. Add salt and store in a container. Tie the mouth of the container with a cloth and put in the sun for 8 days. Store in an airtight bottle or jar and use as mentioned above.

10 AMLA CHATTU I (SALTED PRESERVE) *Recipe courtesy of Savithri, Nellithotta, Mathighatta*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
Ginger: 100 g
Chillies:
4 (sooji menasu - malnad 'needle' chillies - are ideal)
Hing (asafoetida):
¼ tsp
Salt: to taste

Method: Pound the amla, and remove and discard seeds. Crush ginger, chillies and hing. Add to amla pieces in a wooden or earthen pot with salt. Cover and stir once a day for 3 days with a dry spoon. Dry in the sun on banana leaves or on a metal or earthen plate until totally dry and crisp. Store in airtight containers. Keeps for 4-5 years.

Use: To treat dysentery, mix with hot rice and white butter.

11 AMLA CHATTU 2 (SALTED PRESERVE) *Recipe courtesy of Suati Paranjpe, Vadhirajamath, Sonda*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
Ginger: 50 g (fresh)
Green pepper: 10-15
Salt: to taste

Method: Steam the amla, and remove and discard seeds. Grind amla pieces with ginger, green pepper and salt to a paste. Shape into small lemon-sized balls or flat, round disc pieces. Spread on banana leaves, thin muslin cloth or steel plates and dry in the sun or shade until crisp. Store in an airtight container.

Use: Soak amla chattu in a little water and use in tambli or hashi (Malnad raitha). Mix with hot, soft rice and ghee and enjoy!

12 AMLA TAMBli POWDER (PUDI) *Recipe courtesy of Vinoda, Athisara, Kodigar.*

Tambli is an uncooked or cooked buttermilk based drink or curry served with hot rice.

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
Jeera (cumin): 250 g
Pepper: 8-10 corns
Salt: pinch

Method: Grate and deseed the amla. Mix amla and salt and sun dry thoroughly until crisp. Either roast or sun dry the jeera and pepper. Grind dry amla and spices to a powder. Store in an airtight container. Keeps for 2-3 years.

Use: Add 1 tablespoon amla pudi to hot rice and white butter. Helps cure dysentery, stomach ache, urinary problems and piles.

To make tambli: Add 4 tsp of amla tambli pudi to 1 litre buttermilk. Season with mustard, hing (asafoetida) and curry leaves. Garnish with fresh coriander leaves. Good for dysentery and gastritis. You can also use fresh amla to make tambli.

Pickles

I3 WET PICKLE I *Recipe courtesy of Savithriamma, Mathighatta*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
 Red chillies:
 2-3 (or more depending on your taste)
 Hing (asafoetida):
 to taste
 Salt: 100 g
 Water: ½ L
 Oil: 5 tsp
 Mustard seed: 2 tsp

Method: Steam amla lightly, and discard seeds. Boil water, add salt, crushed chillies, hing and amla segments. Season with oil and mustard seeds. Use within 3 months.

I4 WET PICKLE 2 *Recipe courtesy of Minti Jain, Bangalore*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
 Methi (fenugreek) seeds: 1 cup
 Salt: to taste
 Chilli powder:
 4 tbsp, or to taste
 Haldi (tumeric): ½ tsp
 Mustard seed dal (used in pickles): 2-3 tbsp
 Oil : 500 mL
 Saunf (fennel):
 3-4 tsp roasted
 Hing (asafoetida):
 a pinch

Method: Wash and steam the amla. Cut into neat segments. Remove and discard seeds. Drain out excess water by drying in the sun for about an hour. Boil methi seeds in water, drain the excess water and dry on a piece of cloth. Add all the spices in a container which does not corrode, (amlam is acidic and in combination with salt will corrode many metals) and mix. Heat oil well and add it to the amla mixture when it is warm (not too hot). Mix well and store in bottles or jars. Use within 3 months.

I5 DRY PICKLE (NELLI SUPARI) *Recipe courtesy of Savithriamma, Mathighatta*

Ingredients

Amla: 1 kg
 Hing (asafoetida):
 2-3 pinches
 Chilli powder:
 1 tsp
 Pepper: 2 tsp
 Salt: 50 g

Method: Steam amla, remove and discard seeds. Add all the spices to the amla. Mix well. Sun dry for about 8-10 days till amla is thoroughly dry and hard.

I6 KARINELLI PICKLE *Old recipe from Kerala courtesy of Anita Verghese, Kotagiri***Ingredients:**

Amla: 2 kg
Red chillies: 100 g
Red onion (small):
225 g
Garlic: 50 g
Pepper powder:
2 tbsp
Green chillies or
kamthaari: 20
Tender green pepper
on stems: 20
Ginger: 2 1/2 cm
Salt: 115 g
Water: 1 L
Sesame oil: 60 mL
Curry leaves: 2 bunches
Mustard seeds: 2 tbsp

Method: Wash amla. Peel garlic, onion, ginger. Slice ginger, mix with broken red chillies, onion, garlic, green chillies, green peppers, and salt. Cover with water, mix well and put into a fireproof earthenware pot. Tie banana leaves on the mouth of the pot. Boil for half an hour. Remove and set aside. Reheat on a slow flame everyday for 10-15 minutes. Continue this for a week; by the end of the week make sure all the water has evaporated. Heat oil, add mustard seeds, curry leaves and pepper. Add to the amla mixture. Mix well and store in jars or bottles.

Chutneys

I7 AMLA CHUTNEY I *Recipe courtesy of Manorama Joshi, Nandihonda, Sonda*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 cup
 Red chillies: 1-2
 Garlic: 3-4 cloves
 Jeera (cumin): ½ tsp
 Salt: to taste
 Coconut oil:
 enough to fry

Method: Steam the amla, and remove and discard seeds. Fry all other ingredients in a little coconut oil, add amla and grind to a chutney. To release the flavours, keep aside for a week to 10 days before using.

I8 AMLA CHUTNEY 2 *Recipe courtesy of Meenakshi Tyagarajan, Madras (Chennai)*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 cup
 Puttani (roasted, split chickpea) ¼ - ½ cup
 Coriander leaves:
 1 small bunch
 Grated coconut: ¼ cup
 Tamarind: to taste
 Jaggery: to taste
 (optional)
 Salt: to taste
 Chilli: to taste

Method: Steam amla, and remove and discard seeds. Grind with all the above ingredients to a chutney. Tastes delicious with dosa, rice or chapathi. Keep refrigerated and use within a week. Very delicious with rice, dosa and iddilies.

I9 AMLA THOKKU TAMILNADU *Recipe courtesy of Shashi, Bangalore*

Ingredients :

Amla: 1 cup
 Hing (asafoetida):
 a pinch
 Red chilli (dry): 1-2
 Methi (fenugreek)
 seeds: 1 tsp
 Mustard seeds: ½ tsp
 Oil: 2 tsp
 Salt: to taste

Method: Grate amla and remove the seeds. In a few drops of oil, lightly fry hing, chilli and ½ tsp of methi. Powder and keep aside. In a pan add the remaining oil, ½ tsp mustard seeds and remaining ½ tsp of methi seeds. Add amla and fry for 3-4 minutes. Add salt to taste and the powdered spices. Fry for a few minutes. Cool and store in a jar or bottle. Can be preserved up to a month if refrigerated or for a week outside the refrigerator.

Sweet Recipes

25 AMLA MURABBA *(from Gujarat)*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
 Sugar: 2 kg
 Water to make sugar
 syrup: 3 cups
 Cardamom: 5-6 pods
 Cloves: 10
 Cinnamon: 2 pieces;
 2 inches long
 Saffron (kesar): a pinch

Method: Choose large, even-shaped fruit. Wash and thoroughly dry amla, steam and prick with fork. Make a thick sugar syrup by boiling the water and sugar together. Use the finger test to see if it will produce three strings. The finger test for the syrup is done by taking a little syrup between the thumb and a finger; the syrup should stick to both ends and stretch out like a string in between. Add amla and cook until amla is a little soft. Remove from heat, add saffron, powdered cloves, cinnamon and cardamom. Stir till the murabba cools. Store in airtight bottles or jars and stir with a dry spoon every week for 2 months.

26 AMLA CHUNDA *(from Rajasthan) Minti Jain, Bangalore*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
 Sugar: 1 ¼ kg
 Chilli powder: 2 tsp
 Salt: ½ tsp
 Elaichi (cardamom):
 6-7 pods
 Jeera (cumin): 1 tsp

Method: Coarsely grate the raw amla, remove and discard seeds, put it into a container, add sugar and mix well. Cover the mouth of the container with a thin cotton cloth and keep in the sun for about 10 days. Stir with a dry spoon daily. The amla will release its juice, which will eventually turn into a thick syrup. Use the finger test (see recipe 25 Amla Murabba) to check the syrup's thickness.

When the syrup is ready, roast and coarsely grind elaichi and jeera and add chilli powder and salt. Mix well into the amla and keep in the sun for another day to allow the spices release their flavour. Store in dry, airtight jars or bottles.

27 AMLA CANDY I *Recipe courtesy of Keystone Foundation (NGO), Kotagiri, Nilgiris*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
 Sugar: 750 g
 Water: ½ L

Method: Steam amla in a cooker. Remove and discard seeds. Make a sugar syrup of 1 string thickness (see recipe 25 Amla Murabba for the string test). Immerse the amla in the sugar syrup, cover with a lid and keep aside for 7 days. Stir once a day with a dry spoon. On the 8th day remove the amla and spread on a thin cloth or plates. Sun dry for 6 to 7 days (or less if humidity is lower than the Malnad). Store the amla candy in airtight containers.

28 AMLA CANDY 2 *Rajasthani recipe courtesy of Minti Jain, Bangalore*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
 Sugar: approximately 1¼ kg (depends on how sweet the amla is; generally the smaller the fruit, the less sweet it is and thus it requires more sugar)
 Sugar (powdered): approximately 1 cup

Method: Wash and steam the amla. Cook until it is soft but does not disintegrate. Cut into neat segments and deseed. Drain the pieces over a colander or keep in the sun to dry out the excess water. In a container (choose the container with care as amla is acidic and will corrode many metals) add sugar and amla pieces and mix well. Cover and leave it for about 5 days. With a dry spoon, stir the amla 3 times a day.

The amla and sugar together release a syrup that is soaked up by the fruit. Check after 4-5 days to see if the fruit is sweet and tender. Strain through a colander or sieve and spread the amla pieces on cloth or plates in the sun to dry. This takes around 2-3 days in strong sunlight. When ready the amla segments look slightly shrivelled on the edges and are chewy and sweet when bitten into. Finally sprinkle the powdered sugar onto the dried fruit. This will soak up any remaining moisture and give it a sugar coat.

Note: The syrup obtained from straining the amla is ready-made amla juice, so do not discard it! This can simply be stored in a bottle and used as juice concentrate. It won't keep for long though, should be used within a few days.

29 AMLA JAM *Recipe courtesy of Manorama Joshi, Nandihonda, Sonda*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 cup (grated)
 Sugar: 2 cups
 Water: 2 cups
 Cloves: 2
 Cardamom: 2 pods
 Pepper: 4 (optional)

Method: Grate the raw amla and remove the seeds. Boil sugar and water to make sugar solution. Add the amla to the sugar syrup and boil until it has a honey-like consistency. Add the powdered clove, cardamom and pepper. Cool and store in airtight jars or bottles.

30 AMLA BISCUITS *Recipe courtesy of Dr. G.S. Savithri, Sameeksha Ayurvedalaya, Sirsi*

Ingredients:

Amla (freshly grated): ½ cup
 Wheat flour: 1 cup
 Butter: ½ cup
 Sugar (powdered): ½ to ¾ cup
 Salt: pinch
 Baking powder: 2 tsp

Method: Grate the amla and remove the seeds. Combine butter and powdered sugar in a bowl. Sift the flour, salt and baking powder so they mix well. Add the grated amla to the butter-sugar mixture. Add the flour and knead lightly to get a soft dough. Roll out into biscuit shapes. Bake in an oven (electric, gas, or woodfired are all fine).

Variations: Use jaggery as a nutritional alternative to sugar. For savoury biscuits, add salt and ajwain (carom seed) instead of sugar.

31 AMLA BURFI *Recipe courtesy of Sunanda, Kademane*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg
 Sugar: 1 kg
 Cardamom: 2-3 pods

Method: Steam the amla and remove and discard the seeds. Grind to a paste. Combine the amla paste with sugar and cardamom on a slow flame until the entire mixture begins to harden. Remove from fire and spread evenly on a greased plate. While warm, cut into pieces and let it cool. Separate the pieces and store in a container.

THE STORY OF CHYAVANPRASH

This restorative tonic is named after the great sage called Chyavan who had grown very frail and old after years of penance. Legend has it that this preparation was specially formulated by the Ashwini Kumars, physicians to the gods. After taking this tonic, Chyavan began looking so young and youthful that even his wife failed to recognise him when he reached home after years of absence.

34 CHYAVANPRASH 2 *Recipe courtesy of Minti Jain, Bangalore*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1kg
 Elaichi (cardamom): 4-5 pods, powdered
 Saffron: a pinch
 Black pepper powder: 1/2 tsp
 Sugar: 1 1/4 kg
 Ghee: 2 tsp

Method: Steam the amla fruits well. Remove the seeds and mash or grind into a paste. Pass the amla paste through a fine metal sieve (this gives the Chyavanprash a smooth texture). In a *kadai* or wide pan, add the amla paste and sugar. Stir consistently on a slow flame. The mixture will leave the sides of the pan and become the consistency of halwa. Add the rest of the spices and continue to stir. After 5 minutes of stirring, add ghee, mix well and take it off the fire. Cool and store in airtight containers.

35 AMLA LEHYA I *Recipe courtesy of Vinoda, Athisara, Kodigar*

Ingredients:

Amla: 2 kg
 Black grapes (dry): 250 g (soak for 1 hour)
 Nutmeg (Jaikai): 1
 Cloves: 10 -12
 Jeera (cumin): 1 fistful
 Long pepper (Hipli): 10-12
 Peppercorn: 10
 Jaggery or kall sakray: 2 kg
 Ghee: 125 g-250 g

Method: Steam amla, remove and discard seeds, and grind along with soaked grapes. Roast the nutmeg, clove, jeera, hipli and peppercorn and grind to a powder. Add this spice powder to amla-grape paste and mix well. Add jaggery and ghee. Using a thick bottomed vessel, cook the mixture, stirring continuously, until it is firm and totally dry. Cool and store in bottles or jars.

36 AMLA LEHYA 2 *Recipe courtesy of nelli workshop*

Ingredients:

Amla: 2 kg
 Jaggery or kall sakray: 2 kg
 Long pepper (Hipli): 10-12
 Ghee: 4-5 tbsp

Method: Grate amla and remove seeds. Using a thick bottomed vessel, add jaggery, hipli after grinding to a powder and then add ghee. Cook the mixture, stirring continuously, until it is firm.

Juices & Drinks

37 AMLA SQUASH (PANAKKA) *Recipe courtesy of Kusuma, Nilkunda*

Ingredients:

Amla: 50 fruit (small bettada nelli is ideal)

Ginger: 1/2 inch (grate, squeeze out juice)

Sugar: 1/2 kg

Method: Pound amla, remove and discard seeds and grind to a paste. Add ginger juice and sugar. Mix well and store in a bottle or jar. Cover the mouth of the bottle or jar with a cloth. Dry in the sun for 4-5 days and store in airtight containers. Keeps without refrigeration for a year.

Variation: Try adding cardamom or saffron for added flavour. Use jaggery instead of sugar.

38 JUICE CONCENTRATE *Rajasthani refresher courtesy of Minti Jain, Bangalore*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg

Sugar: 1 1/2 kg

Water: enough to wet sugar

Elaichi (cardamom): 3-4 pods, powdered

Saffron: a pinch

Method: Grate the raw amla. Grind and squeeze out the juice by straining it through a piece of fine cloth.

Separately, melt the sugar with very little water (use just enough to wet the sugar). Cook until you get a thick sugar syrup. Ensure the syrup is one string consistency by doing the finger thickness test (see (27) Amla Murabba for the finger thickness test). Add the amla juice, cardamom powder and a pinch of saffron. Let the mixture boil for a few more minutes before taking off the fire. Cool and bottle.

39 AMLA WINE *Recipe courtesy of Mrs. K.P. Abraham, Bangalore*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1/2 kg

Sugar: 3/4 kg + 1 kg

Water: 2 1/2 L

Cinnamon: 3 pieces (2-3 inches long each)

Rice or wheat grains: a fistful

Method: Wash, thoroughly dry and crush the amla. Remove and discard the seeds. Put crushed amla into a glass jar. Add 3/4 kg of sugar and cover with a lid. Stir with a dry spoon every day for 1 week.

After a week, boil and cool 2 1/2 litres of water. Add this along with 1 kg of sugar, cinnamon and rice or wheat to the amla mix. Stir everyday for 10 days while fermentation takes place. Strain 2 or 3 times. Decant a few times and store in bottles. Vintages well for 2-3 years or more.

Hair oils

40 HAIR OIL I *Recipe courtesy of Savithriamma, Mathighatta*

Ingredients:

Amla: 1 kg (after deseeding)

Coconut oil: 1 L

Method: Crush amla. Heat coconut oil and when a little warm, add amla. Keep on a low fire. In an hour, white froth appears. Skim and remove the froth and remove from heat. After the oil cools slightly, strain through a cloth. When completely cool, fill in bottles and cap. Do not bottle and cap when the oil is hot, or it will smell. Will keep for over 5 years if made well.

41 HAIR OIL 2 *Vinoda, Athisara, Kodigar*

Ingredients:

Coconut oil: 1 L

Bhringaraj leaves: 1 fistful or more (ground to a paste)

Brahmi leaves: 1 fistful or more (ground to a paste)

Amla: 1 kg (after deseeding)

Harda (*Terminalia chebula, allalekayi*): 15 (green, deseeded)

Method: Grind amla and *allalekayi* separately with a little water. Mix the amla, *brahmi*, *bhringaraj* and *allalekai* in the coconut oil. Heat until the solids separate out from the oil and settle at the bottom of the vessel. This will take about 1 hour. Cool, strain and store in a bottle. Produces about 750 mL of oil.

Use: Good for hair growth, to cool the scalp and eyes, and to retard the greying of hair.

