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Petals with a Passport: GI-Tagged Flowers of India

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India is known around the world for its rich biodiversity, colourful culture, and beautiful flowers. From temple decorations to wedding garlands, flowers play an important role in Indian life. But some flowers are so special that they are officially recognized with a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. A Geographical Indication (GI) tag is a certification that identifies products originating from a particular region and possessing unique qualities or reputation because of that place. In India, GI tags are given by the Geographical Indications Registry under the Government of India. When flowers receive a GI tag, it means their fragrance, appearance, quality, and cultural importance are closely linked to the region where they grow. These flowers represent the heritage of farmers, local traditions, and natural conditions of that area. Today, several ornamental and flower crops in India have GI status. These flowers are not just beautiful; they also act like “passports of their region,” carrying the identity of their place wherever they go.

Understanding GI Tags in Floriculture

The concept of GI tagging is important in agriculture and horticulture. It protects traditional crops and prevents others from misusing their names.

For example, only jasmine grown in certain districts of Tamil Nadu can be called Madurai Malli. Similarly, flowers grown in specific regions with traditional cultivation methods receive recognition through GI tags.

Importance of GI Tags for Flowers

GI tags provide many benefits:

- Protection of traditional varieties
- Recognition for farmers and growers
- Higher market value
- Promotion of exports
- Encouragement of local tourism and floriculture

These flowers are widely used in religious rituals, festivals, decorations, perfumes, garlands, and cultural ceremonies across India.

1. Madurai Malli -The Fragrant Pride of Tamil Nadu

One of the most famous GI-tagged flowers of India is Madurai Malli, a special variety of jasmine grown mainly in the city of Madurai. This jasmine is known for its strong fragrance, thick petals, and long-lasting freshness. It was granted a GI tag in 2013, making it one of the first flower crops in India to receive this recognition.



Special Characteristics

Madurai Malli has unique features:

- Very intense fragrance
- Rounded buds that bloom beautifully
- Thick white petals
- Flowers that release fragrance strongly at night

Cultural Importance

In South India, jasmine flowers are used in:

- Hair decorations by women
- Wedding garlands
- Temple offerings
- Festivals and celebrations

Farmers cultivate this flower across districts like Madurai, Dindigul, Theni, Sivagangai, and Virudhunagar. The flowers are harvested early in the morning and quickly transported to markets across India and abroad.

Madurai Malli has even reached international markets like Dubai, London, and Malaysia, showing how a local flower can achieve global fame.

2. Mysore Mallige - Karnataka's Aromatic Flower

Another important GI-tagged flower is Mysore Mallige, grown in and around Mysuru. This fragrant flower received its Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2005. The word "Mallige" means jasmine in Kannada. This flower is famous for its pleasant aroma and elegant white petals. The GI tag recognizes the unique climate, soil conditions, and cultivation practices of the Mysuru region that produce this distinctive flower.



Features of Mysore Mallige

- Long and slender petals
- Pleasant and sweet fragrance
- High demand for perfumes and garlands
- Used in religious rituals and temple offerings

Role in Culture

Mysore Mallige is deeply connected with the culture of Karnataka. It is commonly seen in:

- Traditional festivals
- Classical dance performances
- Wedding ceremonies

The fragrance of this jasmine is also used in incense sticks, essential oils, and perfumes, making it an important crop for the fragrance industry.

3. Udupi Mallige - A Sacred Temple Flower

Another GI-tagged jasmine variety is Udupi Mallige, cultivated mainly in the temple town of Udupi. This fragrant jasmine received its Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2008, recognizing its unique qualities and traditional cultivation in the coastal regions of Karnataka, particularly around Udupi. This flower is widely used in temple rituals, especially in the famous Udupi Sri Krishna Temple.



Unique Qualities

- Small but highly fragrant flowers
- Used mostly for temple offerings
- Cultivated traditionally by local farmers

The flower holds spiritual importance and is closely linked with religious traditions in coastal Karnataka.



Hadagali Mallige - A Hidden Floral Treasure

Another GI-tagged jasmine from Karnataka is Hadagali Mallige, grown in the town of Huvina Hadagali and This traditional jasmine flower received its Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2010.

This jasmine is famous for its strong fragrance and attractive buds. Local farmers have cultivated this variety for generations using traditional methods.

The GI tag has helped protect the identity of this flower and increase recognition for the farmers who grow it.



Why GI-Tagged Flowers Matter

GI-tagged flowers are not only beautiful but also economically important. They support thousands of farmers and workers involved in cultivation, harvesting, transportation, and marketing.

Benefits to Farmers

1. Higher market prices
2. Recognition for regional crops
3. Protection from imitation products
4. Opportunities for export

Boost to Tourism

Many flower regions attract visitors during the flowering season. Tourists visit flower farms, markets, and festivals to experience the beauty and fragrance of these special blooms.

This trend is sometimes called floriculture tourism or flower tourism, which helps promote rural economies.

The Future of GI-Tagged Flowers in India

India's floriculture sector is growing rapidly. With increasing demand for natural fragrances, decoration flowers, and exports, GI-tagged flowers have great potential.

Government initiatives and farmer organizations are working to:

- Improve flower cultivation techniques
- Promote exports
- Develop flower processing industries
- Encourage sustainable farming

These efforts will help preserve traditional varieties while creating new opportunities for growers.

Conclusion: Flowers that Represent a Place

Flowers are more than decorative plants; they are symbols of culture, tradition, and regional pride. GI-tagged flowers like Madurai Malli, Mysore Mallige, Udupi Mallige, and Hadagali Mallige show how nature and geography together create something unique. These flowers truly have "petals with a passport." Wherever they travel, they carry the fragrance and identity of their homeland. By protecting and promoting GI-tagged flowers, India not only preserves its horticultural heritage but also supports farmers and celebrates the beauty of its diverse landscapes.