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## A Review on the Health Benefits of Underexplored Country Fruits

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### Bengal currant: *Carissa carandas*

**Vernacular names:** Karonda (Hindi), Kalakkai (Tamil), Karikayi (Kannada), Pedda kalivi (Telugu), Karakka (Malayalam)

Karonda is a nutrient rich fruit with Vitamin C, A, iron, calcium, phosphorus and dietary fiber. It supports digestion, boosts immunity and promotes skin health due to its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Medicinally, aids in relieving indigestion, bloating and skin infections. Vitamin and mineral content of fruit helps to reduce fever, support mental well-being and regulate blood sugar levels. Proanthocyanidins present in the fruit promote urinary tract health. Traditionally, it's used for treating ear aches, diarrhoea and itches.



### Wild melon: *Cucumis callosus*

**Vernacular names:** Kachri (Hindi), Budamkaya (Telugu), Chibbadin (Punjabi), sukkankai/mithukankai (Tamil)

A small, oval fruit native to Rajasthan's Thar desert. Resembling a tiny watermelon, it has a bitter-sour taste that mellows as it ripens. It can be eaten fresh, cooked pickled and also used in chutneys or as meat tenderizer. Medicinally, it is known for stimulating appetite, supporting kidney health and helps in detoxification. Rich in magnesium and vitamin C. It can be used for blood sugar regulation, brain function, skin health promoting collagen production and wound healing.



### Indian date palm/Wild date palm: *Phoenix sylvestris*

**Vernacular names:** Kajur (Hindi), Kaattiintha (Malayalam), Eecham pazham (Tamil), eetha pallu (Telugu), ichalu (Kannada).

Native to Indian sub continent. Trunk marked by a unique "wicker" pattern from old leaf scars makes it easily recognizable. Drought tolerant and hardy, this palm plays a key role in traditional medicine. Fruit is sweet and sour, used to treat fever, diabetes, coughs and urinary issues. The roots, known for antimicrobial properties used as natural toothbrushes. In rural India, flowers are tapped to make sugar and alcohol.



### Indian blackberry: *Syzygium cumini*

**Vernacular names:** Jamun (Hindi), Neredu (Telugu), Kattuchampa/Naval (Malayalam), Naval (Tamil), Nerale (Kannada).

Jamun, also known as Indian blackberry, is a nutrient-rich fruit renowned for its medicinal properties. It contains vitamins, minerals,



and powerful antioxidants. Traditionally used in ayurveda, jamun helps manage diabetes, boosts digestion, and strengthens immunity. Its seeds, pulp, and bark have been found effective against ulcers, high cholesterol, liver damage, infections, and inflammation. Scientific studies, mostly on animals, show promising results in reducing blood sugar, improving kidney and brain health, and offering anti-arthritic and anti-allergic benefits. With its antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory effects, jamun holds potential as a natural remedy for numerous chronic health conditions.

### **Prickly pear: *Opuntia ficus-indica***

**Vernacular names:** Nagphani (Hindi), Papasu kalli (Kannada), Sappathikalli (Tamil), Brahma Jamudu (Telugu), Palakakkalli/ Rakthakally (Malayalam)

Prickly pear, the fruit of cactus plant, offers more than just vibrant colour and sweet taste it also rich in nutrients. Rich in antioxidants and flavanoids, it may help reduce inflammation and protect against oxidative stress which are linked to cholesterol and diabetes. It has high fiber content also supports digestion and blood sugar balance. Prickly pears provides vitamin C, magnesium, potassium and smaller amounts of calcium and B vitamins which play key roles in energy, immunity and heart health.



### **Jackal Jujube: *Ziziphus oenopolia***

**Vernacular names:** Makkay (Hindi), Cherialantha (Malayalam), Surai ilantai (Tamil), Pariki (Telugu), Chee mullu (Kannada)

Fruits are rich in antioxidants, vitamin C, B vitamins, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, iron and dietary fiber which supports digestion, cardiovascular health, bone strength and weight management. The stem and roots are traditionally used to treat ulcers, stomach issues, asthma due to their anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial effects. Studies suggest that potential for anti-diabetic and liver protective benefits.



### **Ground cherry/Sun berry – *Physalis minima***

**Vernacular names:** Tulati pati (Hindi), Sanna budda gida (Kannada), Sodakku thakkali (Tamil), Budama (Telugu), Njottanjodiyam (Malayalam)

*Physalis minima* is also known as golden berries are rich in nutrients offering various health benefits. They are high in Vitamin A, C, K and B-complex along with minerals like iron, calcium and phosphorus. Low in calories and fat, high in fiber supports weight management and digestion. Traditionally used in ailments like fever and spleen disorders, diuretic, analgesic and vermifuge. The skin of golden berries contains nearly three times more antioxidants than the pulp. Eating whole fruit maximizes their health benefits.



### **Wood apple: *Limonia acidissima***

**Vernacular names:** Bael (Hindi), Vilam Palam (Tamil), Koovalam pazham (Malayalam), Vellaga Pandu (Telugu), Belada Hannu (Kannada)

Wood apple native to south India and Sri Lanka, is known for its distinctive taste and numerous health benefits. While the unripe fruit is quite acidic, the ripe fruit develop a pleasant, aromatic flavor. Traditionally, various parts of the plant including the leaves, barks, roots, fruits and seeds have been widely used in ayurvedic medicine. They are especially valued for treating diarrhea, dysentery, peptic ulcers and natural laxative.



Modern research supports the therapeutic potential of wood apple, include antitumor, antimicrobial, antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antioxidant, antimutagenic and antimalarial effects.

**Ivy gourd: *Coccinia grandis***

**Vernacular names:** Kundru (Hindi), Tondekayi (Kannada), Dondakaya (Telugu), kovai (Tamil).

Ivy gourd is nutrient rich vegetable rich in vitamin A, C, B1 and B2 along with iron, calcium and fiber. High fiber and low calorie supports digestion, weight management and overall health. It also offers immune-boosting vitamin C and antioxidant compounds like beta-carotene. It also offers immune-boosting vitamin C and anti-oxidant compounds like beta-carotene. It also promotes healthy skin and hair; helps prevent constipation and kidney stones.

**Manila tamarind/Jungle jalebi: *Pithecellobium dulce***

**Vernacular names:** Kodukkaapuli (Tamil), Seema Hunase (Kannada), Seema Chintakaya (Telugu), Manilapuli (Malayalam).

Originating from Mexico, karonda spread to America, central Asia and India. Fruit is valued for its sweet tart pulp and medicinal properties. Nutritionally, it is rich in vitamin A, B (thiamine, riboflavin), C, fiber, protein, calcium, phosphorus and iron. Traditionally the bark, leaves and pulp are used to treat gum ailments, tooth ache, bleeding, chronic diarrhoea and inflammation. The astringent and haemostatic properties of the bark and pulp help manage oral issues and bleeding. Bark extracts are also used for constipation and tuberculosis.

**Indian jujube- *Ziziphus mauritiana***

**Vernacular names:** Bugari mara (Kannada), Ber (Hindi), Gongarenu (Telugu), Elanthai pazham (Tamil, Malayalam),

Indian jujube is native to India and Southeast Asia. Rich in Vitamin C, A and B-complex vitamins supports immunity, vision and energy metabolism. It also provides essential minerals like calcium, iron and potassium and is high in dietary fiber, aiding digestion and preventing constipation. Low in calories and packed with antioxidants, it promotes skin health and fights inflammation. Traditionally, it is used to treat insomnia, stress, respiratory issue and infections.

**Ice apple: *Borassus flabellifer***

**Vernacular names:** Thati Munjaalu (Telugu), Panangnanguin (Malayalam), Panai/Nungu (Tamil), Tariya (Hindi), Tateningu (Kannada)

Ice apple (Palmyrah) is a hydrating, nutrient-rich fruit know for its cooling properties and multiple health benefits, especially in summer. It contains water, electrolytes and natural sugars that help prevent dehydration and boost energy. Rich in vitamins A,B,C and minerals like potassium calcium, iron and zinc. It supports immunity, digestion and heart health. High fiber content aids bowel movements and relieves constipation. With soothing and inflammatory effects, it soothes skin irritations and promotes healthy complexion. The fruit seeds are also edible. They are a good source of carbohydrates, proteins, and minerals like potassium and phosphorus.

**Banyan Fig: *Ficus benghalensis***

**Vernacular names:** Bargad (Hindi), Marri (Telugu), Aalada (Kannada), Aalam Pazham (Tamil, Malayalam)

Native to Indian sub-continent, the banyan tree has long been valued in traditional medicine. Various parts of tree such as bark, leaves, fruits and latex are used to treat ailments such as dysentery, diarrhea, diabetes, leucorrhoea and wounds. Fruit is nutri-dense superfood rich



in vitamins A, C and K as well as minerals like calcium, iron and potassium. It also contains high levels of antioxidants and dietary fiber, supporting digestive health, aiding in weight management.

**Noni Tree: *Morinda citrifolia***

**Vernacular names:** Nuna (Tamil), Sapanga (Kannada), Togaru (Telugu), Cherumanjanathi (Malayalam), Surangi (Hindi)

Noni is nutrient rich fruit native to Southeast Asia. It contains essential vitamins like C and A minerals such as potassium and iron. Noni juice is high in antioxidants, including beta carotene, iridoids and vitamin E which combat oxidative stress. With low glycemic index, it supports blood sugar control. Medicinally noni is known to boost immunity, reduce inflammation and supports digestion. It may also aid in weight management, relieve management, relieve arthritis pain and lower uric acid levels, potentially reducing gout risk.



**Wild Sage: *Lantana camera***

**Vernacular names:** Raimuniya (Hindi), Pulikampa (Telugu), Unnichi (Tamil), Kakke Natahu (Kannada).

Lantana is native to Central and South America, introduced to India. It has anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties, effective in managing conditions such as fever, cold, coughs, headaches, skin infections and digestive disorders. Lantana fruits are commonly prepared in form of decoctions or infusions and used to alleviate gastrointestinal complaints including stomach aches, diarrhea and dysentery.

