

Semal trees

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The **bark of the Silk cotton tree** (*Bombax ceiba* L.), locally known as the **Semal tree**, is used for bonfires during **Holika Dahan festivities** in Rajasthan.



[ref-shashank birla]

About the Semal trees:

- **Native to India**, the Semal tree is a large deciduous tree distinguished by its **crimson red flowers** and is also known by names such as **Cotton tree**, **Bombax**, and **Indian Kapok**.
- It is a **fire-resistant tree** with cooling properties, featuring a **spiked trunk** and fluffy seed pods.
- Ecologically, it provides **habitat and food** for various species including **rock bees**, **moth** ***Bucculatrix crateracma***, and **golden-crowned sparrows**, and supports animals like **Hanuman langurs** and **Indian crested porcupines**.
- The tree has multiple uses: its parts like roots, flowers, fruits, seeds, stem, bark, and gum are **medicinally valuable** for treating conditions such as diabetes; tribal communities such as the **Kathodi**, **Bhil**, and **Garasia** utilize it for making musical instruments, utensils, and for food, fodder, and fuel wood; its seeds are used to produce **edible oil** for soaps, and its wood is used to manufacture **plywood**, **match boxes**, and **canoes**.
- Its **conservation status** is protected under the **Forest (Conservation) Act 1980**.