

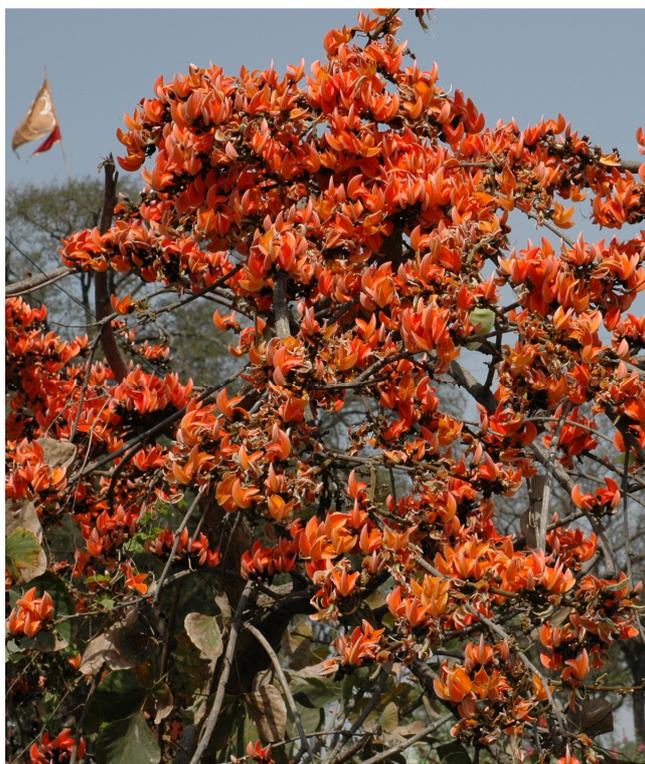
## CHANDIGARH

**State Flower:** Palas.

**Botanical Name:** *Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Taub.

**Common Names:** Bastard Teak, Flame of the Forest (English); Dhak, Palas (Hindi); Palasha (Sanskrit).

**Family:** Leguminosae: Papilionoideae.



***Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Taub.**

**Etymology:** The generic name, **Butea** is given to commemorate John Stewart, Earl of Bute (1713 – 1792), a patron of Botany, then Prime Minister of England; specific epithet '**monosperma**' derived from Greek words 'mono' means single, 'sperma' means seed, referring to the presence of single-seeded pod.

**Description:** A deciduous tree, to 7 m high. Leaves pinnately trifoliolate, ovate-suborbicular,

coriaceous, silky-pubescent beneath. Flowers in terminal racemes, appearing before leaves. Calyx fleshy, pubescent, dark brown. Vexillum ovate, acute; keels incurved, bright orange-red. Stamens diadelphous. Pods 10 – 15 cm long, flat, bearing a single seed at its distal end.

**Flowering:** March – April; **Fruiting:** June – July.

**Distribution:** It is native to Indian subcontinent and commonly found throughout the peninsular region of India; occurs up to 1200 m altitude.

**Economic Importance:** The artificial scars on the bark yield a gum known as 'Bengal kino', which is used as an astringent. Flowers yield a brilliant yellow dye. Young roots yield a strong fibre used for making ropes.

**Traditional Uses:** The tree is considered sacred, and used in worshipping Lord Brahma. Young branches are carried by young Brahmin boy while leaving home as Brahmachari during sacred thread ceremony. Leaves are used to make 'pattal.'

**Medicinal Uses:** Gum is used in dysentery and diarrhoea. Leaves are used as astringent, tonic, also to disperse boils and pimples and are internally used for curing flatulence, worms and piles. Seeds have anthelmintic property and are used as febrifuge. Bark is insecticidal against houseflies and its decoction is given in cold, cough, fever, haemorrhage and menstrual disorders.

**Note:** It is a frost-hardy and drought resistant tree. It can be propagated by seeds or through root suckers.

**Manas Ranjan Debta, Debasmitra Dutta – Pramanick & S.K. Srivastava**

Northern Regional Centre, Botanical Survey of India, Dehra Dun.