

HIMACHAL PRADESH

State Tree: Deodar, Himalayan Cedar

Botanical Name: *Cedrus deodara* (Roxb. ex Lamb.) G. Don

Common Names: Himalayan Cedar (English); Deodar (Hindi); Deodaru, Devadaru (Sanskrit).

Family: Pinaceae

Etymology: The generic name '**Cedrus**' is derived from the ancient Greek name for the coniferous tree; in another opinion the name is derived from the Greek word 'kedron', a river of Judea. The specific epithet '**deodara**' is derived from Sanskrit 'devadaru', refers to 'tree of the gods' or 'timber-of-the-gods'; another



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opinion suggests that the word 'Deodar' is derived from a historical Indian state.

Botanical Description: An evergreen tree, exceeding 60 m in height and 10 m in girth having greyish brown bark. Leading shoots of young trees and branches are pendulous. Leaves occur in tufts of 15 – 20, needle-shaped with sharply pointed apex, 2.5 – 3.8 cm long. Male and female strobili often grow on separate trees, but sometimes on the same tree but in separate branches. Cones are barrel-shaped, 8 – 13 × 5.5 – 8 cm, erect with numerous fan-shaped scales. Seeds are triangular with a broad wing.

Flowering & Fruiting: Male strobili appear in June, ripen and shed their pollen from September to October. Female strobili appear in August and ripen after pollination in November of the second year, i.e., flowering to ripening is about 13 months.

Range of Distribution: This species is native

to Northwestern Himalayas, distributed from Kashmir to Garhwal at altitude ranges from 1210 to 3050 m and is the most important conifer between 1520 and 2440 m. It is also found in eastern Afghanistan, northern Pakistan, southernmost Tibet and western Nepal.

Economic Importance: It is the strongest Indian coniferous wood owing to its anti-fungal, insect-repellent and anti-bacterial properties. It is used as valuable construction material. The primary uses of deodar are for railway sleepers, beams, floor-boards, posts, door and window frames and shingles. It is also used for bridge construction, carriage and wagon building, furniture, packing cases, electric poles, battery separators and second grade pencils.

Traditional Uses: The aromatic oil, extracted from cedar wood is used in alleviating tension, fear and anger, in reconnecting to spiritual awareness and in balancing mental instability since long. In Kangra, the wood is ground with water and the paste is applied to relieve headache. Since very early time, because of its lofty, awe-inspiring height, deodar is considered as the abode of gods. In Western Himalayas, particularly in Kumaon Hills and Kullu Valley, people considered the tree sacred and offer iron pieces as their offering to the Gods dwelling in the trees.

Medicinal Uses: In Ayurveda, whole plants are used in belching inflammation, dyspepsia, insomnia, cough and cold, fever, urinary discharges, bronchitis, itching, elephantiasis, tuberculosis glands, leucoderma, piles, ophthalmia, mind disorder, skin diseases and diseases of blood. In Yunani, the wood is used as diuretic, carminative, expectorant, useful in alleviating piles, rheumatism, palsy, epilepsy, stones in the kidney and bladder and prolapsus recti. The bark is astringent and useful for fevers, diarrhoea and dysentery. The oleoresin of deodar and the dark-coloured oil extracted from the wood are valued as an application for ulcers and skin diseases. They are also useful in curing of sore-feet of cattle.

Note: The plant regenerates naturally in groups or masses of more or less even age in the neighbourhood of seed-bearing plants. Deodar plantations may be raised artificially by direct sowing or by direct transplanting seedlings from a nursery or forest. Although the species can successfully be raised from cuttings but this method has not been in common practice in India.

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

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