

## UTTARAKHAND

**State Tree:** Burans

**Botanical Name:** *Rhododendron arboreum* Sm.

**Common Names:** Rhododendron (English); Burans (Hindi); Kurvak (Sanskrit).

**Family:** Ericaceae

**Etymology:** The generic name, '**Rhododendron**' has been derived from two Greek words, '**rhod**' means 'rosy red' and '**dendron**' means 'tree' referring to the rosy red flowers of the species. The specific epithet '**arboreum**' refers to 'tree-like'.



**Botanical Description:** An evergreen tree growing up to 20 m tall, having rough and pinkish brown bark. Leaves crowded towards end of branches, oblong-lanceolate and narrowed at ends, 7.5 – 15 × 2.5 – 5 cm, glabrous above, white or rusty brown-tomentose beneath. Flowers many in terminal, large, globose, compact corymbs, deep red or pink in colour. Calyx small with broadly ovate, scarious pale yellow lobes. Corolla campanulate, 2.5 – 6.5 cm long with 5 recurved, fringed lobes. Ovary 6 – 10-celled, ferruginously woolly. Fruits capsular, cylindric, curved, longitudinally ribbed; seeds ellipsoid.

**Flowering & Fruiting:** March – November.

**Range of Distribution:** It is native to India, distributed throughout the Himalayas, and also found in Bhutan, China, Nepal and Pakistan.

**Economic Importance:** The wood is used as fuel and for making charcoal. Heartwood is used for making tool-handles, boxes, pack-saddles, posts, plywood and sometimes employed for construction purpose. Bark is used to make excellent snuff. Petals are used to prepare sub-acidic jelly or pickles.

**Traditional Uses:** Petals are eaten for their sour-sweet taste. Flowers are offered to deities in almost all religious functions. Fresh leaves are burnt along with leaves of species of **Juniper/Thuja/Pinus**, for making smoke that is believed to be sacred and help in purifying air in West Kameng and Tawang districts of Arunachal Pradesh.

**Medicinal Uses:** Young leaves are applied to the forehead for alleviating headache. Flowers and bark are used to cure digestive and respiratory disorders.

**Note:** This species regenerates naturally or can be propagated artificially by seed germination or cuttings.

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