

# Tamarind

Common names: Imli, Tamarind

Scientific name: *Tamarindus indica*



It is ironic that the tamarind tree – which is so quintessentially Indian – was introduced into India from East Africa by Arabian traders. It is now indigenised and its sour fruit makes its way into an array of foods across India, while its lacy leaves and spreading branches are a part of the Indian landscape.

In Mumbai it is an evergreen tree and its tiny compound leaves are arranged in ten or twelve pairs. Chinchpokli, Tamarind Lane and Chinch Bunder are all named after the tree. In fact, it is believed that Chinch Bunder was the place where the tamarind pulp was unloaded from ships in the distant past.

The small flowers are yellowish red and the fruit is the familiar imli pod which grows in irregular shapes and sizes. The pulp made from the pod is rich in Vitamin A and C, and the seeds yield a starch which is used by bookbinders as an adhesive.