

## Assyrian Plum: An Underexplored Fruit with Health-Promoting Properties

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### SUMMARY

Lasora is a nutritionally rich and medicinally important fruit that remains largely underutilized despite its long history of traditional use. Its balanced nutrient composition, high fibre content, antioxidant properties, and therapeutic benefits make it a valuable functional food resource. Increased awareness, research, and commercialization efforts are necessary to unlock the full potential of lasora. Promoting this indigenous fruit can contribute to nutritional security, health improvement, and sustainable rural development.

### INTRODUCTION

*Cordia myxa* L., popularly known as lasora or Indian cherry, is an important underutilized fruit tree belonging to the family Boraginaceae and is native to the Indian subcontinent. The crop holds particular significance in North India, especially in arid and semi-arid regions, due to its ability to thrive under harsh climatic conditions and limited water availability. Lasora is a deciduous tree that undergoes winter dormancy and serves multiple purposes beyond fruit production. The immature green fruits, locally referred to as lasora, are widely consumed as vegetables and are also used for pickle preparation, often in combination with raw mango. These fruits can be dehydrated and stored for off-season use, enhancing their utility and availability. Owing to its rapid growth, adaptability to poor soils and tolerance to drought, *Cordia myxa* has emerged as a promising fruit crop for nutritional security in dryland regions. The tree is also known by several common names such as gonda, lehsua, Assyrian plum, and bird's nest tree, reflecting its wide acceptance across different regions. In addition to its culinary value, the species is appreciated for its ornamental appearance and multiple traditional uses. The increasing recognition of its nutritional richness, medicinal properties, and processing potential has led to renewed interest in its cultivation under planned orchard systems in arid and semi-arid agro-ecologies (Choudhary *et al.*, 2024).

### Taxonomy

Lasora belongs to the family Boraginaceae, which includes several species known for their medicinal importance. *Cordia myxa* L. belongs to Kingdom: Plantae; Sub-kingdom: Tracheobionta; Super division: Spermatophyta; Division: Magnoliophyta; Class: Magnoliopsida; Subclass: Asteridae; Order: Lamiales; Family: Boraginaceae, Borage family; Subfamily: Cordioideae; Genus: *Cordia*; Species: *Cordia myxa* (AbdEl-Aleem *et al.*, 2017).

### Nutritional Composition

Lasora fruit exhibits a balanced nutritional profile that supports its traditional dietary use. The pulp contains appreciable amounts of carbohydrates, providing a natural source of energy. Ripe fruits contain moderate levels of natural sugars, while unripe fruits are low in sugars and suitable for savory preparations. Dietary fibre is one of the most significant nutritional components of lasoda. The high fibre content promotes digestive health by improving bowel movement and preventing constipation. In addition, the mucilage present in the pulp exerts a soothing effect on the gastrointestinal tract (Choudhary *et al.*, 2024). Lasora is also a valuable source of essential minerals. Calcium contributes to bone development and maintenance; iron plays a crucial role in hemoglobin formation and prevention of anemia, and phosphorus supports energy metabolism and skeletal health. Essential minerals present in the fruit further enhance its nutritional value. Among vitamins, lasora contains moderate amounts of vitamin C, which supports immune function and antioxidant defense. Bioactive compounds such as phenolics and flavonoids contribute to the antioxidant potential of the fruit, helping protect cells from oxidative damage (Singh *et al.*, 2024)

### Medicinal Properties

Lasora has been widely used in traditional medicine systems due to its therapeutic properties. The fruit pulp is known for its demulcent and expectorant effects and is commonly used to relieve respiratory ailments such as cough, sore throat, and bronchial irritation. The mucilage forms a protective coating over mucous membranes, reducing inflammation and discomfort. Digestive benefits are another important aspect of lasora medicinal use. Traditional preparations are used to manage constipation, indigestion and gastric irritation. The combined action of fibre and mucilage supports healthy digestion and bowel regulation. Various parts of the plant have also been reported to exhibit anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial activities. Extracts from lasora are traditionally used for minor wounds, skin disorders, and infections. The fruit is believed to support liver function and assist in detoxification, further highlighting its therapeutic value (Rani *et al.*, 2021)

**Health Benefits**

Regular consumption of lasora or lasora-based products may contribute to overall health and well-being. The high dietary fibre content supports digestive regularity, improves gut health and helps regulate blood sugar levels. Fibre intake is also associated with improved cardiovascular health. The antioxidant compounds present in lasoda help neutralize free radicals, thereby reducing oxidative stress and lowering the risk of chronic diseases. These compounds also support cellular health and delay age-related degenerative changes. The presence of iron and vitamin C enhances iron absorption, making lasoda beneficial in preventing iron-deficiency anemia. Calcium and phosphorus contribute to strong bones and teeth, particularly important for children, women, and the elderly. Traditional use of lasora in respiratory and inflammatory conditions suggests its potential role in supporting respiratory health (Meghwal *et al.*, 2021).

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