Castor oil plant

Ricinnus communis L.

Code: TREE-00004 **Local / Vernacular name:** Arandi

Description

1. Grows as a large, woody perennial shrub up to 30–40 feet (10–12 meters) tall in the tropics, or as a smaller annual plant (4–8 feet) in cooler climates. Stems are hollow and can range from green to reddish-purple
2. Alternate, large (ranging from 6 to 24 inches across), and palmately lobed with 5 to 11 sharp, tooth-edged points. They often start out bronze or reddish-purple before turning dark green.
3. Inconspicuous, monoecious flowers grow upright on dense spikes (up to 18 inches long). Male flowers are yellowish-green with prominent stamens, while female flowers feature distinct reddish stigmas.
4. The fruit is a round, spiny, three-lobed capsule that turns green, red, or purple. Each capsule splits open to release large, oval, shiny, bean-like seeds with intricate mottled patterns.

Botanical Details

1. **Habit:** Fast-growing, tender perennial shrub or small tree in warm climates.
2. **Leaves:** Large, alternate, palmately lobed with 5 to 11 deep segments and serrated edges.
3. **Flowers:** Monoecious (separate male and female flowers on the same plant) lacking petals, clustered in prominent terminal panicles.
4. **Fruit:** A spiny, three-lobed capsule (regma) that explodes to release seeds.
5. **Seeds:** Oval, mottled, tick-like seeds (castor beans) containing 40–60% oil and the toxic protein ricin.

Uses & Importance

Ecological:

1. **Wildlife Host:** Serves as a primary food source for specialist insects like the castor butterfly and eri silkmoth larvae.
2. **Seed Dispersal (Myrmecochory):** Feeds ants with specialized seed appendages, helping disperse and plant seeds naturally.
3. **Soil Restoration:** Thrives in dry, marginal lands where other crops fail, helping prevent soil erosion with deep roots.
4. **Bio-based Sustainability:** Replaces petroleum in green goods like biodegradable plastics and eco-pesticides (castor cake

Medicinal:

1. **Natural Laxative:** Castor oil stimulates muscle contractions in the intestines to clear the bowels or relieve temporary constipation.
2. **Skin and Wound Care:** Its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties help moisturize dry skin, reduce acne flare-ups, and soothe minor skin irritations.
3. **Joint and Muscle Relief:** Topical packs applied to the skin help ease joint stiffness and pain associated with osteoarthritis.
4. **Traditional Remedies:** Leaf extracts and oils are used in traditional systems like Ayurveda to help reduce local swellings, boils, and infant flatulence.

Cultural:

1. Castor oil was used as a natural laxative and soothing balm.
2. In other culture it is called "Palm of Christ" because of its perceived divine ability to heal wounds and soothe skin irritations.
3. It is also used leaf and oil applications to reduce joint swelling, calm headaches, and treat skin ailments.

Location

GPS: 12.97160000, 77.59460000

Directions: https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&travelmode=walking&destination=12.9716%2C77.5946