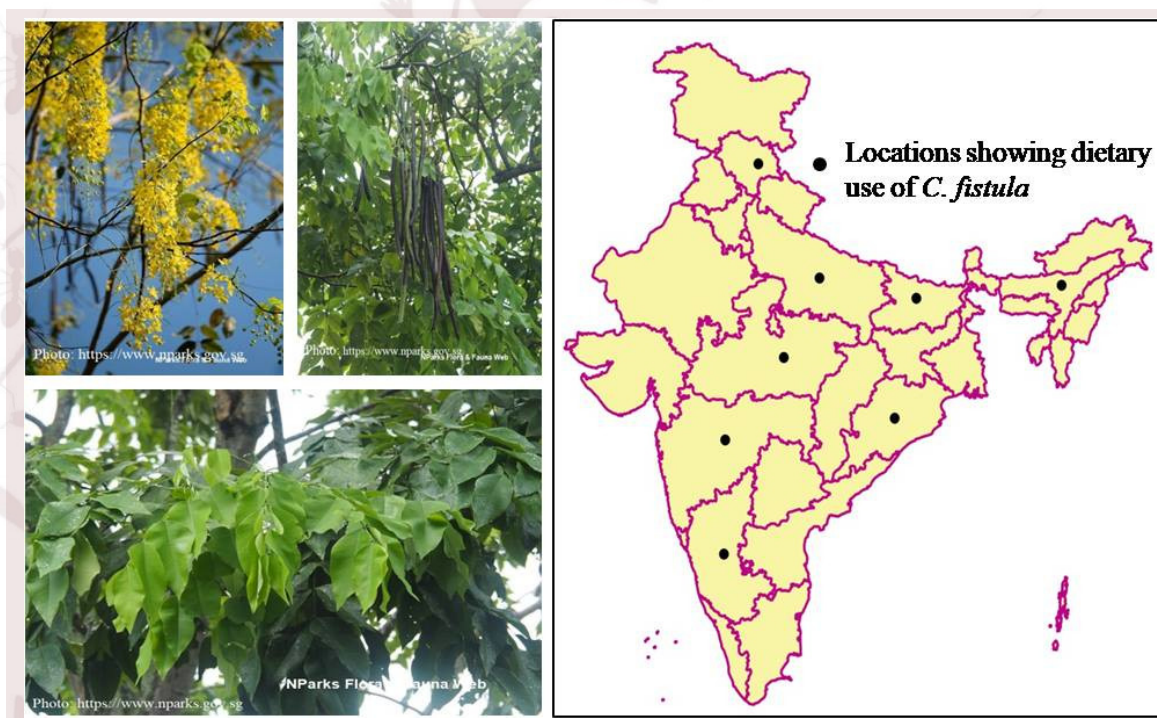


***Cassia fistula* L.**

Family: Fabaceae

This tropical leguminous tree enjoys its celebrity status for its blindingly bright yellow dangling inflorescence and stick-like pods. One of the widely found roadside trees distributed almost all over India, the leaves, flowers and pods of the mighty 'Amaltas' are edible too. In Odisha, flowers are either boiled or stir fried with other vegetables. In Assam, locally known as *Sonaruu*, flower, and flower buds are cooked as vegetables either singly or mixed with vegetables. The pulp of the ripe 'sticky' pod is also eaten. In the northern state of Himachal Pradesh, flowers are used for preparing *Raita* and sweets like *Gulkand*. Young pods are used for pickling after cutting into small pieces and fried with mustard oil. The fried pieces are then mixed with turmeric, chili, and salt, and kept for 15 days to be ready for consumption. Down south, flower-based vegetable dish has also been reported from Maharashtra. The tribes from Jawhar and Shahapur forest areas boil the flower and then add spices to make dry veggie delicacy. Think about the famous *Konnapoo* chutney, it is nothing but *Cassia fistula* flower and popular chutney ingredients in south India. Up north, the young tender leaves are edible in Uttar Pradesh - the leaves are cut into pieces, boiled, and cooked with potato. Finally, spices and salt are added to suit to one's taste.

You may wish to have it with no regret, as there is no dearth of nutrients! *Amaltas* flowers are packed with carbohydrates, protein, lipids, sodium, potassium, and calcium. Fruits are super-rich in minerals and amino acids, iron, manganese, calcium and amino acids like aspartic acid, glutamic acid and lysine. The high energy content (18kj/gm) of the fruit is sufficient for people in need of calorie intake.



**Contributors: Avik Ray, Rajasri Ray**