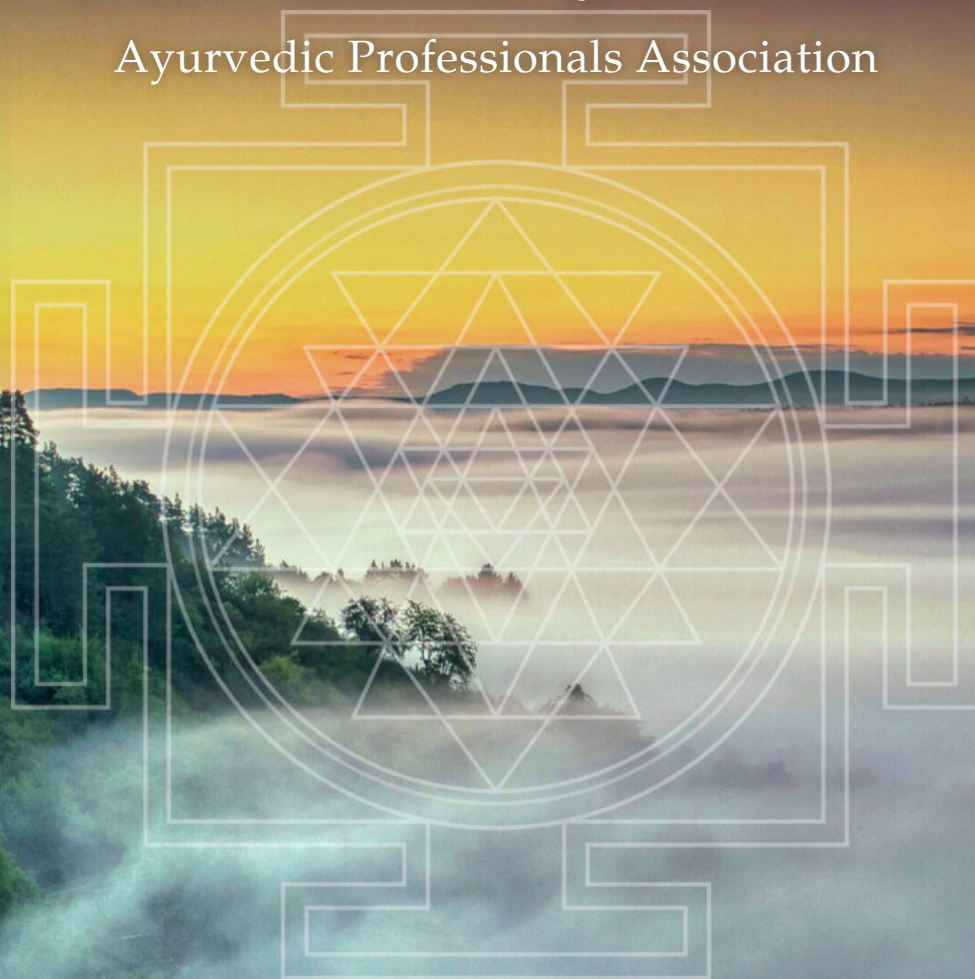


AYURVEDA JOURNAL

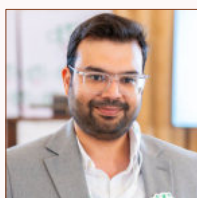
Ayurvedic Professionals Association



Summer 2026



Letter From The Guest Editor



Dear Readers, Members, and Fellow Practitioners, welcome to the Summer 2026 edition of the APA Journal. At this time of year, traditionally celebrated for light, vitality, and renewal —we find ourselves riding the wave of an incredible milestone for our community. This season, the Ayurvedic Professionals Association (APA) celebrated its 21st anniversary at AyurFest 2026.

Welcoming a full house of over 200 delegates, the event brought together practitioners, researchers, and medical professionals under one roof. The sheer energy, professionalism, and spirit of collaboration on display demonstrated exactly how far our profession has come in the UK.

AyurFest brilliantly showcased the important role Ayurveda plays in supporting whole-person care and prevention. More importantly, it successfully strengthened the bridge between traditional Ayurvedic wisdom, integrative medicine, and modern healthcare challenges.

Looking ahead, our vision is clear: we must continue to deepen these relationships with the wider Western medical community, universities, and policymakers. Traditions survive when they evolve, and healthcare transforms when we collaborate. I hope the insights within this issue inspire you to continue representing our profession with authenticity, integrity, and clinical excellence.

With gratitude and warm summer wishes,

Dr Vinayak Abbot

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APA - General Disclaimer

The information contained in this Journal is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or official policy of the *Ayurvedic Professionals Association*.



The Pulse of the APA

One Year On - Reflections from the President



As we welcome the Summer edition of the APA Journal, I find myself reflecting on another important milestone: it has now been one year since I had the privilege of taking on the role of President of the APA.

When I first wrote to members last year, I spoke about strengthening professional standards, increasing collaboration, supporting research, creating meaningful educational opportunities, and raising the profile of Ayurveda within wider healthcare conversations. As I look back over the past twelve months, I am proud of what we have achieved together.

This year has been one of growth, visibility, and connection.

We have strengthened relationships with universities and researchers, supported PhD students exploring Ayurveda-related research, participated in important healthcare discussions, and continued to represent our profession in spaces where Ayurveda deserves to be heard.

AyurFest 2026 was undoubtedly a highlight of the year. As we celebrated 21 years of the APA, more than 200 delegates came together to share knowledge, build connections, and explore the future of Ayurveda in the UK. The energy, professionalism, and spirit of collaboration demonstrated how far our profession has come and the opportunities that lie ahead.

I am also particularly pleased that our educational programme continues to evolve. Our webinars are increasingly focused on clinical practice, continuing professional development, research, and evidence-informed discussions—providing members with relevant and practical learning opportunities that support professional growth.

None of these achievements belong to any one individual. They are the result of the dedication of our volunteers, committee members, speakers, educators, researchers, students, practitioners, and members who continue to give their time, expertise, and support to our shared vision.

Looking ahead, my vision for the coming year is clear.

We must continue to strengthen our relationships with the wider healthcare community, universities, researchers, policymakers, and professional organisations. We must continue



The Pulse of the APA

One Year On - Reflections from the President



supporting robust research, encouraging high standards of practice, and creating meaningful opportunities for our members to develop professionally.

Most importantly, we must work together to build a stronger support system for our profession—one that helps practitioners feel connected, confident, respected, and equipped to thrive in an evolving healthcare landscape.

Ayurveda has much to offer. Our responsibility is to ensure that it is represented with professionalism, integrity, and authenticity.

Thank you for your trust, your support, and your continued commitment to the APA. I am excited about what we can achieve together in the year ahead.

Knowledge grows when it is shared.....Traditions survive when they evolve....Healthcare transforms when we collaborate."

With gratitude and warm wishes,

Dr.(Ayu) Kanchan Sharma

President, Ayurvedic Professionals Association (APA),UK

Ayurveda Consultant, BAMS,PG Dip (Panchkarma),

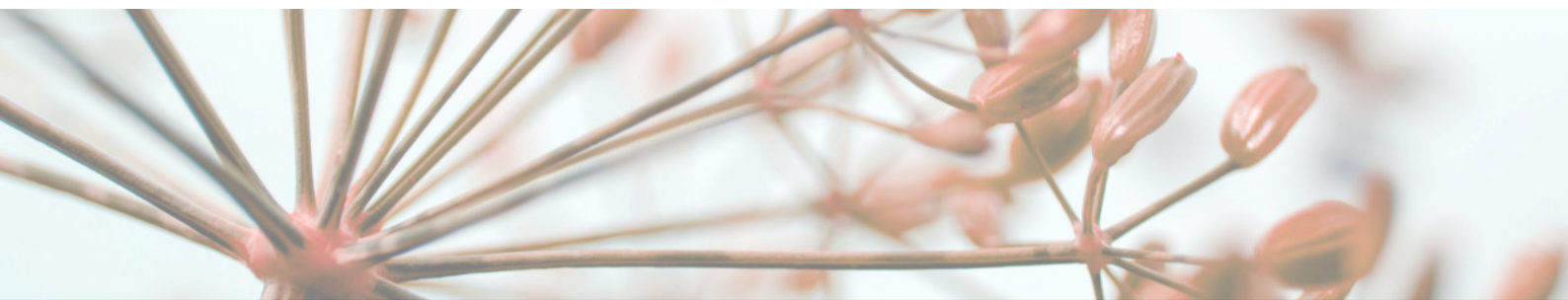
Certified Herbalist and Nutritionist, UK

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APA AYURFEST 2026

Summary by Colette Park



AYURFEST 2026 marked a truly special milestone as the Ayurvedic Professionals Association (APA) celebrated its 21st anniversary. By bringing together practitioners, students, researchers, healthcare professionals, and members of the public, AYURFEST 2026 showcased the strength, diversity, and growing influence of the UK Ayurvedic community. We were delighted to welcome a full house, creating a vibrant atmosphere of learning, connection, and celebration throughout the day. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who attended, supported, and contributed to the day. The enthusiasm, generosity, and shared sense of purpose created an inspiring atmosphere and reinforced the strong foundations for future AYURFEST gatherings.

APA AYURFEST 2026

Summary by Colette Park



The APA extends its sincere thanks to our distinguished keynote speakers—Dr Vijay Murthy, Lothar Pirc, Dr Karen O'Brien-Kop, Dr Manish Pandit, Dr Harishchandra Patankar, Dr Rupy Aujla, Dr Kanchan Sharma, Dr Christopher Etheridge, Dr Sunil Kumar, and Dr Patricia Egwumba—as well as our honoured guests, Dr Palitha Serasinghe, Anne McIntyre, Dr Venkata Narayana Joshi, and Amarjeet S. Bhamra, whose expertise and insights enriched the programme and sparked meaningful conversations. We are equally grateful to our exhibitors and stall holders, whose displays, educational resources, products, and services helped create a vibrant marketplace that showcased the breadth and diversity of Ayurveda and complementary health in the UK. We would also like to acknowledge the tremendous dedication of the APA Executive Committee and volunteers whose hard work behind the scenes made the event possible.

APA AYURFEST 2026

Summary by Colette Park



Through discussions that explored both traditional Ayurvedic wisdom and contemporary healthcare challenges, AYURFEST 2026 helped strengthen the bridge between Ayurveda, integrative medicine, and modern health practice. The event demonstrated the important role Ayurveda can play in supporting prevention, wellbeing, and whole-person care, while fostering collaboration between practitioners, researchers, educators, and healthcare professionals committed to a more integrative future.

APA AYURFEST 2026

Summary by Colette Park



The APA extends its sincere appreciation to all the exhibitors and stall holders who contributed to the success of AYURFEST 2026. Their participation helped create a vibrant and engaging marketplace, showcasing the diversity, innovation, and growing strength of the Ayurvedic community in the UK and beyond.

APA AYURFEST 2026

Summary by Colette Park



We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our supporters and sponsors. Special thanks go to YOGI TEA for generously sponsoring the event with a wonderful selection of herbal and wellness teas enjoyed by attendees throughout the day. We are also grateful to Kama Ayurveda for their generous contribution to the attendee goodie bags, helping to make the AYURFEST experience even more memorable. We also extend our sincere thanks to Gaiea Sanskrit, whose beautiful Sanskrit kirtan performance provided a fitting and uplifting conclusion to AYURFEST 2026.

Royal College of Surgeons Honors Sage Sushruta as Father of Surgery

by Dr. Marc Halpern



Past President with Prof. Chandra Cheruvu



Prof. Chandra Cheruvu, event sponsor and coordinator along with the Cheruvu Family



Dr. Marc Halpern, along side the new monument to Maharishi Sushruta

On June 19th, the Royal College of Surgeons installed a bust of Sage Sushruta, honoring him as the Father of Surgery. The College is the world's oldest and largest surgical institution in the West and has been in operation since 1505 AD. The effort was led by Prof. Chandra Cheruvu and the Cheruvu Family Trust. The Cheruvu family has a multi-generational history, with physicians in the family tied to both Western and Ayurvedic medicine. Dr. Chandra Cheruvu is a graduate of the Royal College.

The program was attended by luminaries from around the world, including Siddharth Malik (Consul General of India in Edinburgh), Professor Rowan Parks (Past President), and Professor Clare McNaught (President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh).

Dr. Cheruvu brought together many luminaries in the fields of Ayurveda and surgery to contribute to a beautiful new book about the contributions of Sri Sushruta. The book is titled *Maharishi Sushruta Compendium: Father of Surgery*.

The unveiling of the monument, the publishing of the book, and the acceptance of the book into the college's medical library are important milestones in

the recognition of the contributions of Ayurveda and Bharat to society.

My contribution to the book is the chapter titled, "*Sage Sushruta Beyond Surgery: The Father of Integrative Medicine*." His classical text explores the integration of Ayurvedic knowledge and wisdom on general health and well-being in pre- and post-surgical care, as well as surgery.

His integration of diet, herbs, lifestyle, and the management of agni, ama, and ojas, in addition to dosha and dhatu, is a model of integration. Of course, his contributions go even further, touching on the whole of internal medicine. For these reasons, Maharishi Sushruta, who lived approximately 3000 years ago, stands alone among the great surgeons and rightfully deserves his place in the illuminated hall of history.

Dr. Marc Halpern, D.C., MAS. (Ayurvedacharya) is the Founder of the California College of Ayurveda, and has played an important role in the development of Ayurvedic medicine in the West. He is considered to be a preeminent practitioner and teacher of Ayurveda in the United States.

<https://www.ayurvedacollege.com/>

What is Panchgavya?

This mixture of milk, curd, ghee, dung, and urine



The intersection of traditional Vedic philosophy and historical Indian medicine offers a unique lens through which ecological health and human wellness are viewed as deeply interconnected. In Ayurvedic literature, the preservation of natural elements is often symbolised by the cow, historically referred to in Vedic texts as Prithvi (the Earth) or Kamdhenu (the wish-fulfilling entity). Historically, a society's wealth and sustainability were closely tied to its livestock.

Within this framework, five specific substances derived from the cow—milk, curd, ghee, urine, and dung—are collectively known as Panchagavya (Panch meaning five, and Gavya meaning derived from the cow). In the traditional system of Panchagavya Ayurvedic Chikitsa, these elements are explored either individually or in combination,

often alongside other botanical preparations, to understand their roles in traditional wellness, agriculture, and environmental restoration.

The Theoretical Framework of Panchagavya

According to classical Ayurvedic theory, the maintenance of health relies on balancing the body's internal energies (Doshas—namely Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) and harmonising the five macro-elements of nature: earth, water, fire, air, and space. Proponents of traditional medicine suggest that modern environmental imbalances in air, water, and soil quality correlate with a rise in chronic lifestyle conditions. Panchagavya is traditionally viewed not merely as a localized therapy, but as a holistic lifestyle intervention designed to address these fundamental elements.

Individual Components and Traditional Attributes

Each of the five components holds a distinct position in classical Ayurvedic pharmacology:

- **Milk (Kshira):** Conserved as a primary nutrient source, valued traditionally for its cooling properties and role in promoting vitality (Ojas).
- **Curd (Dadhi):** Historically utilized for its digestive attributes and role in metabolic health.
- **Ghee (Ghrita):** Regarded as an essential vehicle (Anupana) for delivering herbal formulations deep into bodily tissues, often used in traditional rejuvenation therapies.
- **Cow Urine (Gomutra):** Evaluated in traditional texts for its bitter, pungent qualities, often classified historically as having cleansing or purifying properties.
- **Cow Dung (Gomaya):** Traditionally used in purification rituals, organic farming, and as a raw material for specific traditional preparations.

Contemporary research, including collaborations involving institutions such as the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) laboratories in India, focuses heavily on how genetics, diet, and rearing conditions influence the biochemical profiles of these five components.

Traditional Procedures and Formulations

Panchagavya therapies are frequently integrated with specific delivery methods outlined in classical texts like the Sharangdhara Samhita. Two notable methodologies include:

1. **Gandusha Procedure:** Gandusha is a traditional oral hygiene and systemic therapy where the mouth is filled completely with a medicated liquid (which can include specific Gavya preparations or herbal decoctions). The patient holds the fluid entirely still with the face slightly lifted. The procedure is maintained without movement until the oral cavity fills with secretions, or until watery discharge appears from the nose and eyes, signalling the completion of the therapeutic retention.
2. **Shukta Kalpana:** This refers to a specialized bio-fermentation process. According to classical definitions by scholars such as Dalhana and Yadavaji, Shukta is a fermented liquid preparation involving components like roots, fruits, fats, and salts. Unlike standard fermentations that yield high alcoholic content, Shukta undergoes a predominant acid fermentation, resulting in a distinctively sour taste profile. This traditional formulation method is used to preserve active ingredients and enhance bio-availability.

Perspectives on Modern Integration

Proponents of Panchagavya therapy highlight several socio-economic advantages within the framework of complementary medicine:

1. **Accessibility and Cost-Effectiveness:** Because the raw materials are naturally derived and readily available throughout agrarian regions, these preparations offer a low-cost, sustainable alternative or adjunct to conventional options, particularly in resource-limited settings.

Panchagavya Ayurvedic Chikitsa: Principles, Theory, and Traditional Applications

by V. D. Jaiminikumar Rasane



1

1. Cow urine



2

2. Cow dung and curd



3

3. Milk and ghee



4

4. Ingredients are cooked



5

5. Finished ghee

2. Preventive Approach: When administered under professional guidance in appropriate traditional dosages, Panchagavya is integrated into daily routines (Dinacharya) as a preventive measure to maintain systemic equilibrium.
3. Holistic Rehabilitation: For individuals exploring complementary care options for long-term health maintenance, these traditional frameworks offer an alternative pathway focused on lifestyle modification and metabolic balance.

While historical narratives and traditional practitioners document various success stories, modern scientific research continues to evaluate the safety, standardization, and exact biochemical pathways of these ancient formulations to better understand their place in contemporary global health matters.



Benefits of Panchagavya

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The poster for the APA Webinar features a dark brown background. On the left is a still life image with a harmonium, a lit diya, and a mortar and pestle. In the center is the APA logo (green 'apa' with a vine) and the text 'Ayurvedic Professionals Association' in red. Below the logo, the title 'APA WEBINAR' is in large green letters, followed by the subtitle 'AYURVEDIC PSYCHOLOGY & END-OF-LIFE CARE: INTEGRATING AYURVEDA AND INDIAN MUSIC THERAPY FOR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING' in white, and the speaker 'BY DR SHUBHAM KULKARNI' in green. The date and time 'Saturday, 18th July 2026 10 am - 11.30 am (BST)' are in white. On the right is a portrait of Dr. Shubham Kulkarni, a man in a blue blazer, sitting at a desk.

APA
Ayurvedic
Professionals
Association

APA WEBINAR

AYURVEDIC PSYCHOLOGY & END-OF-LIFE CARE:
INTEGRATING AYURVEDA AND INDIAN MUSIC
THERAPY FOR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
BY DR SHUBHAM KULKARNI

Saturday, 18th July 2026
10 am - 11.30 am (BST)

Booking link: <https://tinyurl.com/bde2mt93>

In this webinar, participants will explore Ayurvedic perspectives on psychological wellbeing and common emotional challenges such as stress, anxiety, depression and grief. The session will also examine the role of Ayurveda in palliative and end-of-life care, highlighting how it can support emotional, spiritual, and existential wellbeing during times of profound transition.

About the speaker:

Dr Shubham Kulkarni, BAMS, MD (Ayurveda), is an Ayurvedic physician, educator, and international speaker specialising in Ayurvedic psychology, mental health, palliative and end-of-life care, and Indian Music Therapy. He has presented lectures, workshops, and training programs internationally, integrating classical Ayurvedic wisdom with contemporary approaches to holistic healthcare.

Dr Kulkarni's work focuses on the application of Ayurveda for emotional wellbeing, psychological health, chronic illness, and compassionate end-of-life support. He is particularly interested in the therapeutic use of Indian classical music as a complementary modality for healing, emotional regulation, and spiritual care. Through his teaching and clinical work, he seeks to bridge traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with modern healthcare needs, making these ancient principles accessible and relevant to contemporary audiences worldwide.

Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*) in Ayurveda

by Andrew Mason



Bilva or Bael (*Aegle marmelos*)

Introduction to Bilva or 'wood apple'

Wood apple, is known in Ayurveda as Bilva or Bael (*Aegle marmelos*). It is considered a versatile tree, sacred and pharmacologically potent. Unlike some natural remedies, that prize a single component of the plant, Bilva is celebrated for its roots, bark, leaves, fruits and seeds. Its fruit is particularly interesting, as at various stages of maturity it possesses unique chemical profiles and therapeutic actions.

'Not everyone's cup of tea'

During my study period in Sri Lanka, one 'much appreciated respite' was dropping into a chair and sipping a glass of wood apple juice. The local pharmacy (where I staying) had a small, basic restaurant in-house, which was cool and just enough away to mute the noise of traffic on the bustling main road. This drink was (relatively speaking) a rather expensive treat, but one I came to rely upon as something of a life saver and battery charger. Twenty minutes of drinking while pondering the greater mysteries of life, was certainly one of the routines that helped kept me sane in the punishing temperatures, noise and dust.

While I relished this treat, others, mostly resident patients or students, found the taste (and smell) off putting. I frequently heard comments like, poo! Smells like sweaty socks, or, that stinks of old cheese!

While this sounds bizarre, the somewhat 'funky' aroma of wood apple, does have a real life biochemical explanation for its aroma that is more than a subjective figment of ones personal taste. While wood apple is generally prized across Sri Lanka and India, for its rich, complex flavour, it does also have a habit of triggering polarizing responses.

First and foremost, its aroma comes down volatile organic compounds which the fruit releases as it ripens. The pulp of Wood apple contains short-chain fatty acids and specific alcohols, which in isolation, might be described as having a sharpness, pungency and somewhat - fermented aroma. As the fruit undergoes its year-long dramatic ripening process, sealed within its woody shell, these compounds exponentially concentrate. You might even say, that this fruit literally stews in its own juice. For those with sensitive olfactory systems, its

Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*) in Ayurveda

by Andrew Mason



Divul Kiri

fermented undertones are laced with similar chemical families that are also produced by harmless bacteria upon human skin, hence the impression of having a sweaty sock/aged cheese kind of vibe.

As the fruit becomes slightly overripe, its natural sugars increase fermentation rapidly, turning a mild pleasantly musky aroma, into a sweet/sour to heavy aroma laced with alcoholic undertones. These observations aside, wood apple pulp is rich in tannins, resinous gums, and organic acids like tartaric acid.

Divul Kiri

Divul Kiri is the name of the traditional wood apple drink, made by scooping out its dense, brownish pulp and blending it with sugar/jaggery and coconut milk. While the latter milk balances the fruit's harsh acidity (coconut milk fats actually trap and carry those heavy, musky volatile aromas), the jaggery gives it a welcome sweetness as well as an extra pleasant taste.

Divul Kiri, has an immediate and profound cooling effect on the entire gastrointestinal tract. In Ayurveda, the fully ripe wood apple fruit is classified as Sheeta (cooling) and Grahi (binding but highly absorbent). The moment it enters the stomach, it forms a slippery, protective barrier over the mucosal lining. If you are experiencing stomach acidity, a burning sensation from spicy food, or mild gastric irritation, Divul Kiri instantly neutralizes the heat, soothing inflammation and calming hyper-acidity. This is something welcomed in an environment of very hot and spicy foods! With that brief introduction aside, we will now get into the nitty-gritty of this amazing plant!

Growth Cycle:

The growth cycle of the Bilva tree is interesting, it is a slower developing tree, but steady - this mirrors its hardy, resilient nature. As a deciduous plant, its seasonal rhythm begins in the late winter months of January to February. Here, the tree sheds the majority of its leaves to conserve moisture. By April - May, as the Indian summer heat builds, it moves into its renewal phase, flourishing with aromatic leaves, closely followed by clusters of sweet, fragrant, greenish-white flowers.

The fruit development period is exceptionally long, requiring nearly a full year from the time of pollination to maturity. After its flowers fade, small green fruits form and slowly develop throughout the monsoon and winter seasons, remaining rock-hard and deep green for months. They finally ripen the

Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*) in Ayurveda

by Andrew Mason



following spring, between March-April turning into their distinct yellow-green or greyish-yellow hues.

When raised from wild seed, this tree grows slowly, typically taking seven to eight years to bear its first crop of fruit. Modern grafted varieties can be made to fruit within four to five years. The matured tree is incredibly hardy, capable of surviving temperature extremes ranging from below freezing to over forty-eight degrees Celsius, though it usually demands a pronounced drier season, to produce its fruit successfully.

Geographically, Bilva is indigenous to the Indian subcontinent and thrives predominantly in dry, open, deciduous forests, as well as across hilly plains up to an altitude of twelve hundred meters. Within India, it is found growing wild and abundantly across the central and northern regions. States such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and the drier parts of the southern peninsula, host large native populations of the tree.

Beyond India, the plant has naturalised and distributed itself widely across neighbouring South and Southeast Asian countries through wild spread and deliberate human cultivation. It is quite common to see Bilva in Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The deep-growing roots of the Bilva tree carry dense, stabilising properties that help balance Vata and Kapha doshas, making it invaluable for restoring physiological equilibrium. Because



Lord Shiva in contemplation at the base of a Bilva tree

harvesting its roots requires uprooting the tree, contemporary Ayurvedic practice modern sustainable cultivation, to preserve this vital medicinal resource. In addition, some other plant parts might also be added to the preparation, to bulk the quantity of material.

Shivadruma (Shiva's tree)

Bilva is deeply woven into the mythological and spiritual fabric of India, where it is revered as Shivadruma, the tree of Lord Shiva. Important texts like the Shiva Purana declare that no ritual worship of Lord Shiva is complete without the offering of Bilva leaves, and the tree itself is regarded as a manifest form of the deity. Worshipping beneath its branches or using its components in rituals is believed to confer immense spiritual merit, equivalent to performing major Vedic sacrifices.

Puranic legends recount how the tree emerged directly from the divine energy of the cosmos,

Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*) in Ayurveda

by Andrew Mason



Dried Bilva leaf

imbuing it with sacred power. Because its unique leaves are said to please Lord Shiva immensely, planting, nurturing, and protecting a Bilva tree is considered a highly auspicious act that brings both material prosperity and spiritual protection to a household. Furthermore, in some regional traditions, it is believed that serpents naturally avoid the tree, beautifully symbolising its inherent power to subdue poison and neutralize toxic influences. According to Puranic legend, the Bilva tree is said to have emerged directly from the sweat droplets of Shiva's consort, the Goddess Parvati.

The distinctive trifoliate leaf form of Bilva is also used to symbolise Trimurti - the divine trinity of Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva, representing the three cosmic functions of Creation, Preservation, and Dissolution.

Bilva in Ayurveda

Bilva stands out in Ayurveda, due to its remarkable effects on the digestive system. The unripe fruit is astringent, hot in potency, and highly effective in controlling diarrhoea, dysentery, and irritable bowel conditions because of its ability to absorb excess moisture and toxins.

In contrast, the ripe fruit acts as a gentle laxative and cooling agent. Beyond digestion, Bilva is valued for its hypoglycemic properties that support blood sugar regulation, respiratory benefits in conditions like asthma and bronchitis, anti-inflammatory actions, and wound-healing capabilities. Its leaves and bark also exhibit antimicrobial, antioxidant, and blood-purifying qualities, making the entire plant a comprehensive therapeutic agent.

Its leaves are frequently utilised in daily regimens to manage type two diabetes, while the stem bark and oils are applied to alleviate stubborn earaches and skin infections. Bilva can be prepared as a decoction, powdered, its fruits made into jams, or juices.

Which Part, What Effect?

Bilva is a classic example of a whole-system medicine in Ayurveda, where its different parts are deliberately chosen to treat entirely different ailments based on their unique chemical profiles. Let's take a quick look at its bark, leaves, fruits and seeds.

- **Bark:** Both root and stem bark of Bilva are heavy, dry, and highly grounding, making them exceptional for balancing Vata and Kapha disorders. Classically, its bark is utilised for its anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties. Decoctions made from boiling the bark are used to treat chronic rheumatoid arthritis, reduce severe tissue swelling, and calm nervous system disorders.
- **Leaves:** Drinking the fresh juice or a decoction of the trifoliate leaves helps significantly

Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*) in Ayurveda

by Andrew Mason



improve insulin sensitivity, regulate blood sugar levels, and manage type two diabetes. The leaves are also naturally rich in essential oils that act as excellent expectorants; when warm leaf paste or juice is administered, it helps clear excess mucus from the respiratory tract, easing acute asthma, chronic coughs, and bronchitis.

- **Unripe Fruit:** This stage is highly astringent (Kashaya), bitter, and pungent. It is the premier Ayurvedic remedy for binding the bowels and drying up excess fluids. It is routinely prescribed to treat chronic diarrhoea, amoebic dysentery, and the painful cramping associated with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

- **Ripe Fruit:** In this state, it acts as a mild, gentle laxative that cleanses the intestines and relieves chronic constipation. It is excellent for toning the digestive tract, soothing hyper-acidity, and cooling down systemic internal heat.
- **Seeds:** Its seeds, nested within the fruit pulp is a concentrated source of bitter compounds, resins, and therapeutic fixed oils. They possess potent anthelmintic properties, meaning they are traditionally used to safely expel intestinal worms and parasites from the digestive tract. When the seeds are pressed for their oil, the resulting extract is highly valued for its strong antifungal and antibacterial activity.

The Forgotten Nervous System: why Western Psychology has overlooked the Enteric Brain

by Dr. Hans H. Rhyner

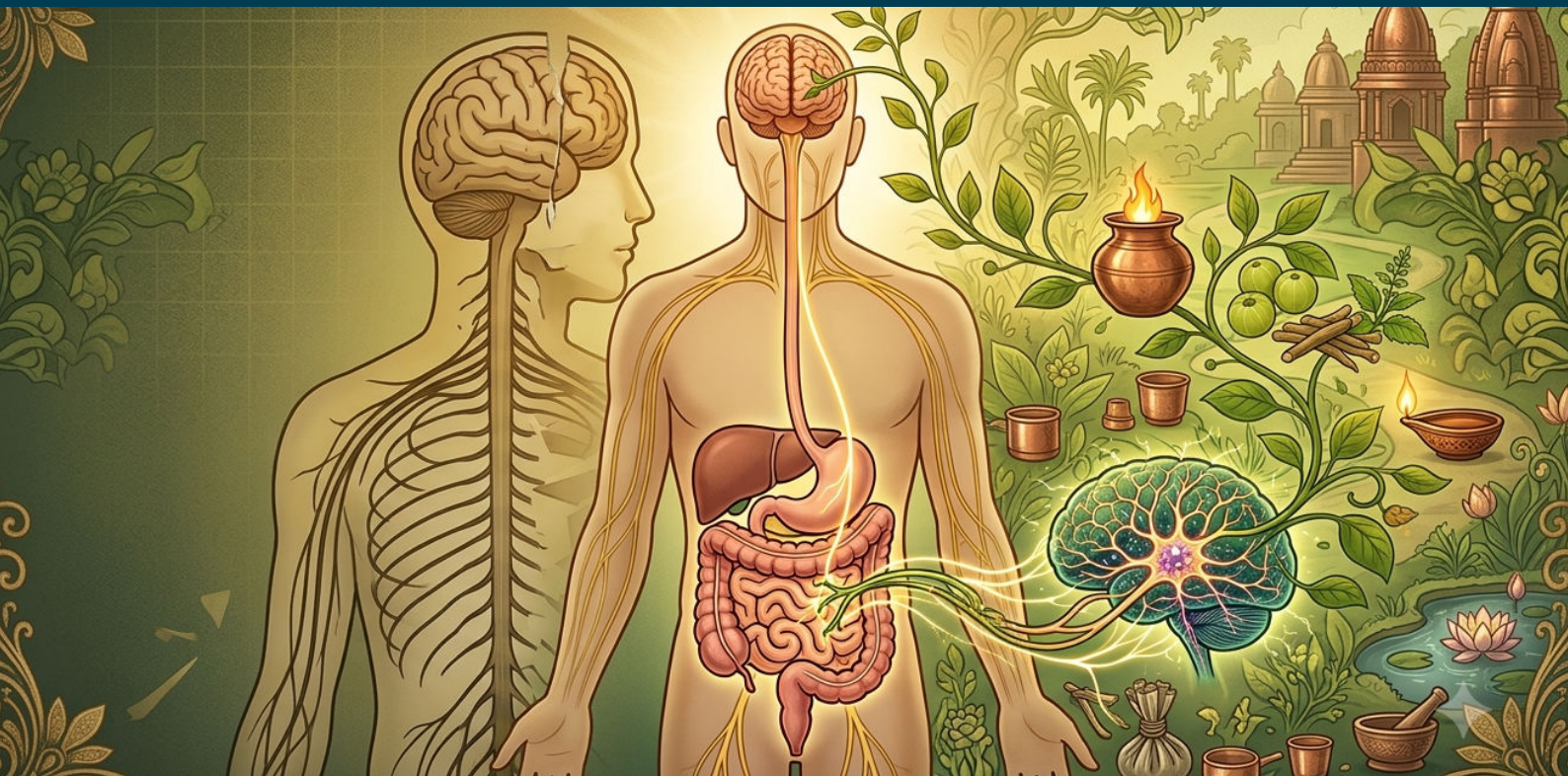


It is one of the quiet ironies of our time: we live in an age preoccupied with mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and self-regulation — and yet perhaps the most important organ of psychological balance receives little attention: the gut. More precisely, the enteric nervous system — our “gut brain”. It governs not only digestion and metabolism, but also those subtle inner currents we experience as intuition, mood, and inner security.

In modern psychology, this system is rarely addressed. When emotions are discussed, the focus falls almost exclusively on the limbic system, the amygdala, and the prefrontal cortex. The gut appears, if at all, merely as a metaphor — a “gut feeling”. Yet this is not poetic language but neurophysiological fact. Around one hundred million neurons are distributed throughout the digestive tract — more than in the spinal cord. They form an autonomous network that functions independently of the brain while remaining in constant dialogue with it via the vagus nerve.

The Forgotten Nervous System: why Western Psychology has overlooked the Enteric Brain

by Dr. Hans H. Rhyner



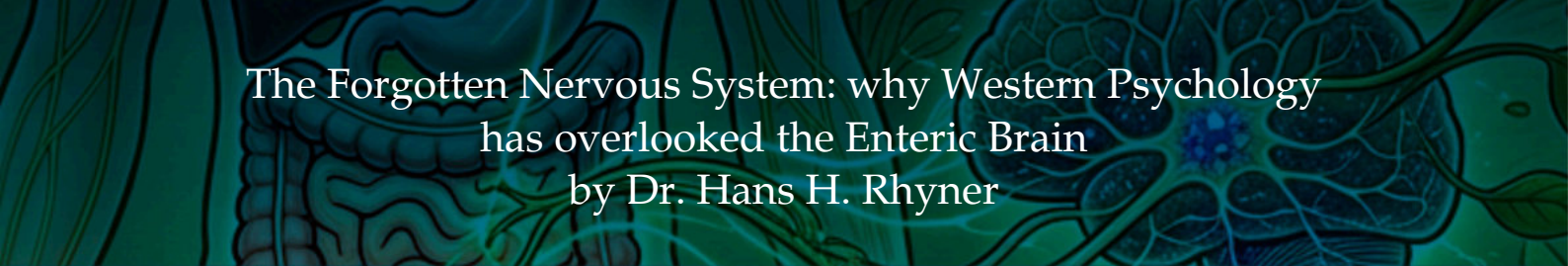
It is one of the quiet ironies of our time: we live in an age preoccupied with mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and self-regulation — and yet perhaps the most important organ of psychological balance receives little attention: the gut. More precisely, the enteric nervous system — our “gut brain”. It governs not only digestion and metabolism, but also those subtle inner currents we experience as intuition, mood, and inner security.

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independently of the brain while remaining in constant dialogue with it via the vagus nerve.

This connection is not new knowledge. In Ayurveda, the abdomen is the seat of Agni, the inner fire that digests food, sensory impressions, and experience alike. When Agni is strong, thinking is clear, emotional life is stable, and action is guided by discernment and compassion. When Agni weakens, the consequences are not limited to indigestion; mental dullness, restlessness, and depressive states may follow. Ayurveda therefore recognised what modern neuroscience is only gradually confirming: that consciousness and digestion are expressions of the same process, operating on different levels.

Western psychology, by contrast, distanced itself early from the body. Since Descartes’ division of mind and matter, an analytical dualism has prevailed that elevated cognition above embodied experience.



The Forgotten Nervous System: why Western Psychology has overlooked the Enteric Brain

by Dr. Hans H. Rhyner

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Western psychology, by contrast, distanced itself early from the body. Since Descartes' division of mind and matter, an analytical dualism has prevailed that elevated cognition above embodied experience. The human being became defined primarily as a thinking entity, while the body was reduced to a mechanism that produces symptoms at most.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, this is only a fragment of reality. The human being is not divided into two, but structured in three: body, mind, and consciousness. The body — formed from the five elements — is the gross material aspect. The mind, with its subtle layers of Manas, Buddhi, and Ahankara, mediates perception, discrimination, and identity. Beyond these lies Atma or Purusha — consciousness itself: silent, witnessing, unchanged. Health arises when these three — body, mind, and consciousness — resonate with one another. Suffering arises when they fall out of alignment.

This is precisely what occurred within Western psychology: it concentrated on thought and

neglected the body — and with it the gut brain, that sensing organ which forms a bridge between matter and mind.

It was too somatic for psychologists, too psychological for gastroenterologists, too diffuse for neuroscientists. Only in the 1990s did Michael Gershon at Columbia University demonstrate that the gut not only produces serotonin, but uses it to regulate neural activity throughout the organism. Roughly ninety per cent of the body's serotonin is produced in the gut, not in the brain. When this system is disturbed, our thinking, perception, and sense of vitality change with it.

One might say that the gut is the stage on which the psyche performs, while the head provides the direction. Western psychology, however, often studies the direction but not the performance. Anxiety, depression, and burnout are treated as cognitive distortions or neural malfunctions rather than as expressions of a weakened inner digestive fire.

In clinical practice, this relationship is evident every day. People who describe themselves as empty or exhausted rarely suffer from mental strain alone. They also show signs of impaired Agni: cold extremities, bloating, disturbed sleep, fluctuating mood. As digestion stabilises, the mind often follows. Ayurveda describes this interplay as the balance of Samana Vata, Sadhaka Pitta, and Prana Vata — the forces that process food, thought, and emotion.

Modern research now speaks in related terms: the gut-brain axis, microbiome signalling, vagal regulation. Yet while laboratory science counts

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neurotransmitters, Ayurveda describes the quality of movement — warm or cold, rhythmic or stagnant, vital or obstructed. This qualitative dimension is what is often missing: the understanding that healing is not merely a chain of stimuli and reactions, but a flow.

Coaches and psychologists today speak frequently of self-regulation and resource activation. Yet the most fundamental resource we possess does not sit in the head — it lies a hand's breadth below the navel. Where breathing deepens, where the nervous system settles, where trust arises. Trust is not a cognitive decision. It is a state of autonomic balance. And this state does not emerge from affirmations, but from the subtle inner movement of Prana in the abdominal space.

From an integrative medical perspective, the gut can be understood as an organ of consciousness — not as the seat of impulses, but as a centre of integration. The gut thinks, feels, and remembers in its own way. When we listen, it speaks in waves, in warmth, in stillness. When ignored, it speaks through bloating, cramps, insomnia, and fear.

Western psychology will have to expand if it truly intends to heal. It must include the body again,

learn to understand the language of the organs, and restore the dialogue between head and gut. This is not esotericism; it is neuroscience moving towards completeness.

Ayurveda offers a bridge. It connects biological knowledge with the lived experience of consciousness. It teaches that every organ reflects the state of mind, and every feeling is a movement in the body. When this is understood, the artificial boundary between psyche and soma dissolves. We then recognise:

Digestion is the oldest form of thinking. And perhaps inner peace arises not from thinking less — but from feeling more deeply.

For more information please see: <https://www.ayurveda-rhyner.com/>

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Putting Rasāyana Back on the Radar

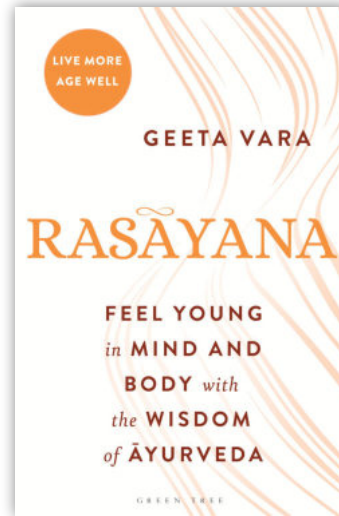
by Geeta Vara

As practitioners, we relish proudly on the uniqueness of Āyurveda as a system of preventative medicine. Yet in clinical practice, it's surprisingly easy, for even experienced practitioners to become pigeon-holed to the curative side of Āyurvedic practice with consultations largely revolving around pathology (of course we need this!). We may be missing a trick here however, as we find ourselves increasingly occupied with disease management especially while preventative wellbeing has been enthusiastically adopted by the wider health industry. Somewhere along the way, we may have overlooked one of Ayurveda's most distinctive strengths - *nourishment*.

What I have been observing over the years; is that not only has pathology become dominant, but our approach to health has also narrowed - often reduced to some kind of food restriction, fasting, cleansing in response to the increasingly toxic load on our bodies. Ayurveda is the science of life and longevity, and while we may be living longer, we're not necessarily living out those years 'better'.

Alongside treating imbalances, the science of Rasāyana (rejuvenation and longevity) helps us to reorientate our offerings so we can also lean into helping our patients/clients restore and protect their mind and body as they age. Bringing a focus to building strength through nourishment, cultivating immune resilience, enhancing mental clarity.

Acharya Charaka summarises Rasāyana beautifully: *'Rasāyana promotes longevity, memory, intelligence, freedom from disease, youthful age, excellence of lustre, complexion and voice, optimum strength of body and senses.'*



Traditionally Rasāyana is often associated with specialised therapies or the classical kuti praveśika protocol. But for our day-to-day life and practice, Rasāyana practices can still be implemented through *brimhana* protocols: consistent deep *nourishment of the dhātus*

through food, herbs, and daily habits that stabilise vāta as the body ages steadily, restore tissue quality and essentially cultivate ojas, the subtle essence of well-nourished tissues and the foundation of vitality, immunity, and resilience.

Making Ojas central to wellbeing

In this context, ojas can be understood as the refined essence of well-nourished tissues, that forms the basis of our resilience, immunity and subtle vitality. Warm milk prepared with digestive spices, dates or soaked almonds; ghee used thoughtfully; rice preparations such as kheer enriched with nourishing fats; and tonifying broths are simple examples. These slowly restore the dhātus over time.

Herbs such as *ashwagandha*, *shatavari*, *guduchi*, and *amalaki* are prized for their rasāyana qualities. They do not merely target disease states; they improve the quality of tissue metabolism itself. When agni is stable and rasa dhātu is well formed, the entire system benefits downstream. Even classical Rasāyana drinks such as herbal milks, gritams, or preparations like chyavanaprash work through this same principle: nourishing the tissues while supporting subtle vitality.

Putting Rasāyana Back on the Radar

by Geeta Vara

Ageing as a Rasāyana Conversation

Ageing is often framed clinically as degeneration - loss of bone density, declining digestion, disturbed sleep, cognitive changes. Ayurveda recognises these processes, particularly through the natural dominance of vāta in later life. But Rasāyana reframes the conversation. Instead of focusing solely on *what is deteriorating*, we need to ask: how do we maintain the quality of rasa and ojas despite the passage of time?

This shift subtly changes how we practise. We move from correcting imbalances to *continuously cultivating vitality*.

I was reminded of this when visiting a traditional kuti in Kerala earlier this year - a simple structure designed for classical rejuvenation retreats. What struck me was not the complexity of treatments but the emphasis on rhythm: nourishment, rest, gentle therapies, and a protected environment where ojas could gently rebuild.

The lesson I took away was simple. Rasāyana does not always require elaborate protocols; *it requires conditions that allow deep nourishment to occur*.

Bringing Rasāyana back into practice:

For those of us working clinically, putting Rasāyana back on the radar means asking slightly different questions:

- How strong and well-nourished is the patient's rasa dhātu?
- What is the state and quality of their ojas?
- Are we only correcting dosha and agni, or are we actively building resilience and vitality?
- Are we supporting them in developing

awareness of their agni, its fluctuations and staying adaptable?

- Are we guiding them towards truly nourishing foods and rhythms for the long term?

Are we cultivating an inner radiance that reflects alignment, vitality and a deeper sense of wellbeing?

Sometimes the most profound intervention is not another corrective herb but *daily Rasāyana habits*, perhaps its nourishing drinks, strengthening herbs taken consistently, or food choices that steadily support tissue quality. Creating a clear sattvic mind for our future selves, through nourishing rituals, clearing negative samskaras, realising our dharma or getting clear on our *sankalpa*.

In my own work (and as I discuss in my book), I often see patients transform on their wellbeing journey not only when pathology is treated but when *ojas is cultivated intentionally*.

When Rasāyana becomes part of the clinical mindset, prevention stops being a concept we talk about and becomes something we practise and encourage every day so that we can live *longer and stronger*.

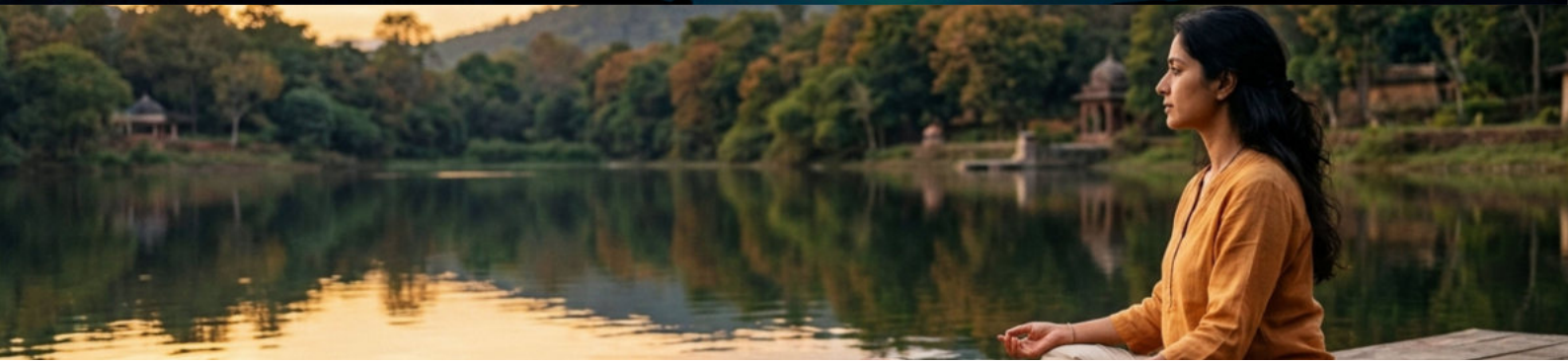


This subject has become a deep passion of mine, leading me to write my second book - *Rasayana*. For more information see: <https://www.geetavara.co.uk/>

Geeta Vara is an author and London-based Ayurvedic practitioner with over 20 years of clinical experience, focusing on preventative health and pro-ageing.

Reflections on Fluctuating States in Ayurveda

by Dr. Akshatha M. Bhatt



Over the past few months, I began noticing states where the body did not seem to respond predictably to either heating or cooling approaches. Symptoms appeared mixed, tolerance fluctuated, and interventions that initially seemed appropriate did not always continue to feel supportive. What first appeared to be straightforward doshic presentations gradually revealed a more shifting and layered picture.

This became especially noticeable during periods of climatic fluctuation and seasonal adaptation. Textbook understanding often guides us toward reducing, drying, and heating approaches during phases of Kapha predominance. Yet in some individuals, associated Pitta or Vata qualities may coexist alongside Kapha-dominant or Ama-associated presentations, where excessive reducing, drying, or heating measures gradually produce irritation, depletion, dryness, burning sensations, or discomfort. The presentation no longer responds comfortably to absolute opposites alone.

At other times, the pattern may evolve during the course of treatment itself. A productive cough may initially improve with drying therapies, only to gradually shift toward dryness and irritation as prolonged drying begins to aggravate Vata,

requiring a softer or more unctuous approach. Similarly, one may encounter states of strong appetite and frequent hunger accompanied by features of indigestion or loose stools, where reducing approaches intensify depletion while nourishing approaches worsen heaviness or digestive discomfort.

Such experiences raise an important clinical question: what happens when oppositional approaches no longer behave predictably?

Classical oppositional principles remain foundational in Ayurveda. However, certain phases in disease, treatment, or seasonal adaptation appear less fixed and more dynamic in nature. In these states, doshic qualities may overlap, fluctuate, or express themselves unevenly, producing presentations marked by heaviness alongside internal warmth, congestion with underlying dryness, fluctuating appetite, altered bowel patterns, or discomfort toward both heating and cooling measures.

Such fluctuating states also bring to mind classical Ayurvedic approaches such as Vyatyasa Chikitsa, where management may require thoughtful

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adjustment or alternation of therapeutic qualities rather than rigid continuation of a single approach. At times, management may involve subtle recalibration between heating and cooling, nourishing and reducing, or unctuous and drying measures, guided by the patient's evolving presentation and response.

These states are often transient rather than stable pathological entities. They may emerge during climatic fluctuation, periods of reduced adaptive capacity, recovery phases, or while the system is responding to intervention. In such moments, excessive reliance on rigid oppositional strategies may further aggravate discomfort rather than restore balance.

What becomes increasingly important in these situations is observation. The patient's changing response to an intervention may at times become more informative than the initial symptom itself. Agni, appetite, bowel patterns, sleep, energy, tolerance, and overall response require closer attention than rigid categorisation alone. The emphasis gradually shifts from fixed correction toward ongoing assessment and gentle regulation.

This does not always imply the need for aggressive treatment. Many fluctuating states resolve with appropriate adaptation, consistency in ahara and vihara, and avoidance of extremes. Yet these phases quietly remind us that Ayurveda is not merely the application of opposites, but also the art of timing, proportion, observation, and responsiveness to change.

Perhaps it is in these uncertain and fluctuating states that Ayurveda demands its most refined application - not through rigid formulas, but through the ability to observe carefully, adapt thoughtfully, and remain attentive to the individual experience of balance and imbalance.

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Update from the EHTPA: Guggul (*Commiphora wightii*) Added to CITES Appendix II



Guggulu resin



The European Herbal & Traditional Practitioners Association (EHTPA) has informed the APA that the guggul tree (*Commiphora wightii*, syn. *Commiphora mukul*) has been listed in CITES Appendix II following adoption at the 20th Conference of the Parties (CoP20).

Guggul is a traditional Ayurvedic herb widely used for its therapeutic applications and has also attracted interest within Western herbal medicine for its potential actions on cholesterol, heart health, osteoarthritis, and skin conditions, although clinical research findings have been mixed. The new listing aims to ensure that international trade does not contribute to over-harvesting of wild populations.

Key implications:

- **Regulated Materials:** The listing applies to all parts and derivatives of the plant, including raw and processed gums, powders, essential oils, and extracts.
- **Retail Exemptions:** Finished products packaged and ready for retail sale—such as capsules, tablets, pills, and cosmetic products—are exempt from CITES permit requirements.
- **Permitting Requirements:** Exporters of raw guggul gum or resin must obtain CITES export permits, which are granted only when trade is determined to be non-detrimental to the species' survival in the wild.

Practitioners, suppliers, and manufacturers working with guggul should ensure they are aware of the new requirements and any implications for international sourcing and trade. Find the CITES listing here: <https://cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>

The APA extends its thanks to the European Herbal & Traditional Practitioners Association (EHTPA) for bringing this important update to the attention of member organisations and practitioners.



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