



# Treelogies

*Trees and  
Flowering Plants  
of Kokan  
in their God-Given  
Dignity and Beauty*

# ***“Treelogies”***

**Trees and Flowering Plants of Kokan  
in their God-Given Dignity  
and Beauty**

**A Series of 12 Watercolor Paintings**

**by Mumbiram**







**While living in Kokan about 15 years ago, Mumbiram was impressed by the unique and pristine quality of the flora of the region and created a series of Tree-scapes. These “Treelogies” bring out the flora’s fragile yet vital aesthetic importance in the unique cultural milieu of the region. They are admired and appreciated by all those who share with us the great concern we feel about the neglect and deterioration of the natural and aesthetic quality of our planet.**

***“Trees not only give us fresh air to breath,  
they offer us intimate kinship and communion  
as noble and handsome friends and philosophers.  
They continually inspire us to see the dignity of all  
living entities. They keep our sense of wonder alive.”  
(Mumbiram)***

## **Twelve Treelgies**

**“Papaya Tree and Chikku Tree”**

**“Parrots visit a Garden of Mango,  
Hibiscus and Banana”**

**“Coconut Palm, Bharal Tree  
and Rukmini Plant.”**

**“Ravan-Maad-Palm, Drumstick Tree  
and Chameli Flower”**

**“Peacocks under a Chinch Tree  
and through Rui Plants”**

**“Guava Tree, Gulbakshi Plant and Ivy Creeper”**

**“Champak Tree, Phanas Tree and Tulasi Plant”**

**“Gulmohor Tree, Bamboo and Ghaipat”**

**“Picking Parijatak and Sadaphuli Flowers”**

**“Devotee dancing under a Bel Tree  
along with Madhumalati Plant”**

**“Cows at the Lotus Pond with Banyan Tree  
and Green Champak Tree”**

**“Neem Tree, Aloe Vera and Alu Plant  
on a Full Moon Night”**





## **“Papaya Tree and Chikku Tree”**

**The Papaya Tree with its graceful palm-like leaves grows very fast and is also very fragile. Within months the tree sends out huge pear-shaped fruit that is delicious and full of nourishing nutrients.**

**A full-grown Chikku Tree is laden with egg-shaped sweet juicy chikkus all year around.**

**The long leaves of the Bhoorja Palm have been used for writing manuscripts before paper became popular.**

**The Kotwal (Inspector) Bird gets its name from its bullying behaviour even towards birds many times larger than itself. His sorties in the open sky are spectacular.**



## **“Parrots visit a Garden of Mango, Hibiscus and Banana”**

**Even in a humble garden in Kokan one is sure to find a Mango Tree, a Banana Tree and several Hibiscuses in different shades of red, yellow and white.**

**Looking out your window you notice a pair of velvet-green parrots perched amidst tender pink new foliage of the Mango Tree.**

**Hot food served on banana-leaves gets sweeter and tastier. Vegetables out of banana flowers are a culinary delicacy, but you must know which parts you need to discard.**

**Blood-red hibiscus flowers are favorite offerings to Lord Ganesha. Lord Shiva is happy with white hibiscuses. One sees the yellow and orange varieties sitting pretty on the crests of native Beauties.**





## **“Coconut Palm, Bharal Tree and Rukmini Plant.”**

Coconut Trees give Kokan its distinctive landscape features. Its immense compound leaves weave beautiful patterns against the sky. They are used for making roofs, partitions and fences in native homes. The sturdy stems of the tree make pillars and beams in these houses. The water in the fruit is a refreshing healthy drink. The flesh in the fruit is used in cooking and in extracting coconut oil, which is a staple of native haircare. The fibre around the fruit is woven into ropes and mat. The Coconut Tree is rightly called Kalpavriksha (wishfulfilling tree).

The Bharal Tree is one of the exotic varieties of palms that grow in Kokan. Its leaves appear as if they are artistically trimmed with a pair of scissors. Recently they have become decorative additions to all varieties of bouquets of flowers. Full-grown Bharal Tree sends down bunches of strings each looking like a garland of beads. The Rukmini Plant has bright red delicate flowers with a long stem and exactly four short petals. The flowers appear in bunches that arrange themselves in near-perfect hemispheres. It is a popular garden plant.

The Bharadvaj Bird, like sages of antiquity, is a rare visitor to your garden from his unknown mysterious hideaways. A sighting of Bharadvaj Bird is considered to be an auspicious omen.





## **“Ravan-Maad-Palm, Drumstick Tree and Chameli Flower”**

The Ravan-Maad is an exotic variety of palm found nowhere else in India. Other palms do not branch out, Ravana-Maad does, like the ten-headed Raaavana of Ramayana. It is an endangered variety, native only to coastal wilderness of Akshi-Nagaon south of Alibag.

South-Indian Sambhar Curry gets its distinctive taste from the stubs of drumsticks floating in the gravy. Every rural household in Kokan is sure to have a few drumstick trees in the yard or along the fence. When the tree breaks out with white blossoms everything appears auspicious and beautiful around the house.

The flowers of the Chameli look as beautiful on the bushes as they do in garlands in loving offerings.

Notice the tiny green birds sitting on the tips of the palm leaves. Every so often the birds leap into the sky only to land at the same exact spot again. On account of this apparently compulsive behaviour this bird is called ‘mad parrot’. It is neither a parrot nor is it mad. From his vantage position the bird watches insects floating in space. Then picks a few in one sweeping sorty.





## **“Peacocks under a Chinch Tree and through Rui Plants”**

**Beyond the little village school you will see an enormous old Chinch Tree. Young boys and girls are milling under its shady expanse. Children lust after the most sour hooked fruit. Their mothers use it in cooking. The brown seeds pass as currency in juvenile economy.**

**You won't have to walk very far outside the village before you encounter an abandoned wild growth of Rui Plants. The smooth oval leaves of this humble plant are offered to Lord Shani (Saturn). Bumblebees are hovering over its purple-white flowers. When the ripe pods of its fat beans open in the dry season they give out soft silky cotton, that flies in the wind.**

**In those unfrequented quarters replete with vines and climbers you will be blessed with a glimpse of wild peacocks.**





## **“Guava Tree, Gulbakshi Plant and Ivy Creeper”**

**Bulbul Birds habitually roam through people’s private gardens and shamelessly warble and whistle in meaningless monologues. Here they are doing their thing from a Guava Tree, which is really a monopoly of the parrots.**

**The Gulbakshi Plant has handsome leaves and thin long buds that open into delicate magenta flowers, alas, just an hour before sunset.**

**You are likely to ignore the bell-shaped white and blue flowers of the Ivy Plants. They grow everywhere they are allowed to grow. They make even abandoned neglected cowsheds look very romantic.**





## **“Champak Tree, Phanas Tree and Tulasi Plant”**

The Champak Tree sends out branches skywards that resemble graceful dancers with raised arms. Its flowers are of delicate hues and an equally delicate fragrance. Red, orange, purple or yellow, the Champak Tree adds a musical quality to any landscape.

The Jackfruit (Phanas) has fruits weighing several kilos precariously hanging from its main stem. This is a tropical tree for which Kokan is famous. The fruit has very thick skin that is scaly on the outside and sticky inside. Inside the ripe Jackfruit are seeds with golden yellow fleshy coats that are delicious and hauntingly aromatic.

The Tulasi Plant has a place of honour in the Indian household. It has many varieties that grow in great abundance as forest undergrowth. Krishna’s Vrindavan was literally a forest of Tulasi (Vrinda) Plants.

The black and white dayaal bird announces its arrival with a distinctive warble. You rush to the window to find the pair that visits your garden everyday although very briefly.





## **“Gulmohor Tree, Bamboo and Ghaipat”**

**When the Gulmohor Trees along the village-paths blossom out in brilliant red and orange colors the whole forest appears to be on fire. This is also the season when Kokil (Cuckoo) Birds resound the forest with their sonorous calls in the fifth note of the musical spectrum.**

**It’s a very friendly tree. Children love to climb on it. The red and white petals of the flowers can be eaten. Children find it tasty. The long dry beans are regularly used in mock sword-fights.**

**Different varieties of Bamboo grow in abundance in different parts of Kokan. Bamboo is so versatile, it is another wishfulfilling tree of Kokan. Bamboo forms thick islands and romantic shady bowers where the ground is covered with a bed of dry yellow leaves.**

**Wild Ghaipat has long supple leaves, The leaves are fibrous and are used to make linen cloth as well as ropes.**





## **“Picking Parijatak and Sadaphuli Flowers”**

**Parijatak Tree originally belonged to Indra’s Nandan Forest in the heavenly planets. Krishna brought it on our planet for one of his beloved wives. On your morning walk along the winding path of the village you are sure to meet a Parijatak Tree. It blossoms in the night and the fragrant white flowers come down in showers and cover the ground below. You help yourself to hand-fulls and there are still lots and lots more.**

**You cannot miss the Sadaphuli plants. They are covered with delicate white flowers that appear in very unique pentagonal geometry. Recently it has been discovered that this plant yields an anti-cancer medicine.**

**Bumble Bees are hovering over the flowers for their own selfish reasons.**



## **“Devotee dancing under a Bel Tree along with Madhumalati Plant”**

Shiva, the ash-smeared matted-hair consort of the Daughter of the Mountain, Girija, is placated and decorated with the triple-tips of the Bel Tree. Nearly all old temples in Kokan are dedicated to Lord Shiva. A little forest of bel trees laden with perfectly round succulent fruits has an ecstatic, spiritual quality. Gandhiji’s Sevagram Ashram near Wardha abounds in bel trees.

The area around Shiva Temples usually have a flower garden dedicated to the temple. The aesthetic, spiritual and environmental needs of society find an integral expression through leaves, flowers and fruit of trees, through their colors, textures and fragrances.

Vines of Madhumalati are covered with bunches of flowers that hang down under their own weight. Each flower has a thin long stem and smart short red petals. Help yourself to as many as you want. There will be more next morning.



## **“Cows at the Lotus Pond with Banyan Tree and Green Champak Tree”**

The solemn and noble Banyan Tree sits solidly at the side of the Lotus Pond. It is sending downwards more roots to greet the earth. One is reminded of the upside-down banyan tree mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita - the tree of existence in the material world with roots reaching for the spiritual sky.

This is where adolescent cowherd boys might rest or play while the cows graze on the pastures.

The flowers of the Green Champak Tree are green in color and therefore inconspicuous in the green foliage. Its hauntingly sweet aroma drifts in the wind and hits you in vulnerable, nostalgic and youthful areas of the heart.





## **“Neem Tree, Aloe Vera and Alu Plant on a Full Moon Night”**

**The sturdy Neem Tree is a familiar sight all over rural India. Even the most remote and isolated settlements are sure to have a few Neem Trees adorning the landscape.**

**The Neem Tree purifies the environment. Various parts of the tree contribute the natural ingredients in tooth-pastes and mosquito-repellent creams.**

**The Moon shining through the Neem Tree is a popular theme of lullabies that mothers sing to put baby to sleep.**

**The thorny Aloe Vera Plant grows even in arid land. The pulp in its fleshy leaves has medicinal qualities. It is taken internally and also used externally for skin and hair care.**

**Many varieties of the Taro Plant grow in wild abundance during the monsoon. Not all of them are edible. Alu is an edible variety that goes into many delicious festive vegetable preparations.**

