



The magical herb

Of all the herbs used within Ayurveda, Tulsi (holy basil) is pre-eminent, as it has many beneficial properties needed to reduce physical, chemical, metabolic, and psychological stress. In India, this ubiquitous plant assumes even greater significance as Hindus regard it as a sacred manifestation of Goddess Lakshmi, and worship it for good luck, wealth, and prosperity. So read on as Advika Singh, AIS VKC Lucknow, XI C tells you all about this one-plant-many-benefits herb.

The popular ones



Rama Tulsi

Botanical name: *Ocimum Sanctum*
Known for: With a clove-like scent & mellow flavour, Rama Tulsi has bright green leaves with white/purple flowers. It is the most common variety and is used for medicinal purposes.



Shyama Tulsi

Botanical name: *Ocimum Tenusiflorum*
Known for: Dark purple or blackish leaves & pepper flavour, Shyama Tulsi has a distinct strong aromatic smell. The plant acts as a rectifier for several infections for throat, respiratory & skin. In fact, the oil from this plant is widely used as drops to treat ear pain.



Vana Tulsi

Botanical name: *Ocimum Gratissimum*
Known for: With anti-ageing properties, Vana Tulsi or Wild Tulsi is native to Java, Sri Lanka, India & Africa. The lemony aroma and flavour of this plant makes it a popular ingredient in the making of tea to boost one's immunity as well as for improving physical endurance. Also, its strong scent repels insects.



Kapoor Tulsi

Botanical name: *Ocimum Kilimandscharicum*
Known for: With a distinct camphor-like fragrance, Variegated Tulsi or Kapoor Tulsi has glossy & serrated green or purple leaves. It is the most favoured herb in the making of ayurvedic medicines & has the essential qualities to treat acne & eczema.

Back in time



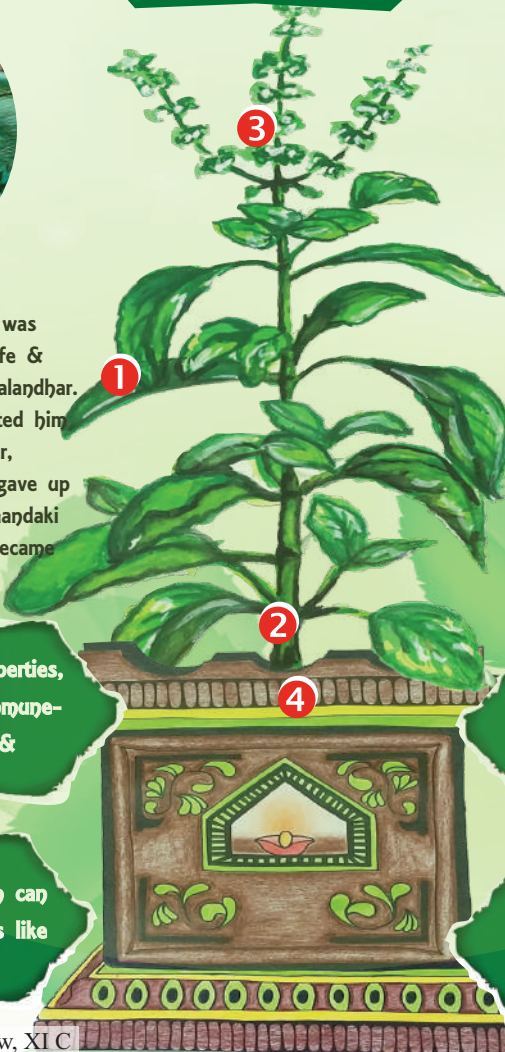
Tears of Vishnu

As per a legend, Tulsi originated during the Samudra Manthan when Gods & demons churned the cosmic ocean for the elixir of immortality. Lord Vishnu shed tears which fell on Earth & sprouted as Tulsi plant.



The pious wife

A legend tells that Tulsi was born Vrinda in another life & married to demon king Jalandhar. When Lord Vishnu defeated him in battle, Vrinda, in anger, cursed Lord Vishnu and gave up her life to become the Gandaki River, wherein her hair became the Tulsi plant.



Worth more than gold

Once Satyawati, one of Lord Krishna's wives, wanted to prove that she could donate gold equalling Krishna's body weight, but all her gold couldn't measure up. Rukmani suggested that one Tulsi leaf be placed along with the gold & immediately the scale moved up.



Tulsi Vivah

Vrinda gained the status of a goddess named Tulsi & her earthly form is the Tulsi plant. In popular tradition, in accordance with a blessing by Vishnu to marry Vrinda in her next birth, Lord Vishnu, in the form of Shaligram, married Tulsi on Prabodhini Ekadashi.

1 Leaves: Used in traditional medicine for their therapeutic properties, the leaves of Tulsi have anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory & immunomodulatory effects. They are also used to treat coughs, colds & respiratory disorders.

2 Stem: The stem possesses anti-inflammatory properties, which can help reduce inflammation & swelling associated with conditions like arthritis & rheumatism.

3 Seeds: Tulsi seeds are diuretic, anti-diabetic & antioxidant. They are used to improve renal function, reduce blood sugar levels & manage diabetes. The seeds are also suitable for skincare treatment.

4 Roots: The root of this plant is known to detoxify the body & support liver health. Chewing the root or using it in toothpaste or mouthwash can help fight against dental problems.