

(No subject)

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piprani

PIP-rahnee

pakhri • pakhari



Ficus lambertiana (?)

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Moraceae – Fig family

SEASONS: LEAVES are shed early in the dry season. Trees are bare by December. Leaves renewed in March or April. FIGS ripen in March-April, possibly with later flushes as well.

My notes on the seasonal behaviour of piprani are probably not reliable because I only saw it on 3 occasions

I did not find a local name for this tree and so have had to improvise with one of the discarded names of the pakhad (*Ficus virens*) to which it is probably closely related. The botanical literature makes no clear distinction between the two species, and yet the form and texture of the ripe figs make it amply clear that this tree needs to be recognized as a separate entity, even if it turns out to be only a variety or subspecies of the other. Piprani's figs are clothed in long, white hairs, somewhat like a miniature tennis ball (before yellow balls became de rigueur). This character alone is sufficient reason to separate it from pakhad. In all my travels in C India I only came across a few specimens of this tree in the Balaghat-Mandla region.



THE LEAF is not easy to tell apart from pakhad's. The margins may be slightly more scalloped in this species

BARK pale grey or brown, more or less smooth with a few rough patches here and there

LEAVES up to 20cm long, smooth, on long stalks, base slightly heart-shaped, short-pointy at apex; secondary veins yellow, prominent on both sides, forming loops just inside the edges of the leaf

FIGS more or less spherical, in pairs, on relatively long velvety stalks; covered in shaggy white hairs when ripe



THE FEW SPECIMENS of piprani that I found were all growing in open savannah in regions of relatively high rainfall



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