



Tree temples: Gulmohurs, amaltas, and other species could become a major tourist attraction – and much more than just that

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The Earth is ablaze with red, and the sky swoops down to encircle the flames with blue. The fire is the vivid flowering of the gulmohur and the blue, the bloom of the jacaranda, both heralding the advent of a north Indian summer in a botanical display of exuberant colour.

They are the precursors of the amaltas, which blossoms in mid-May in cascades of brilliant yellow, sunlight ensnared and transformed by secret alchemy into glowing gold.

The living canvas of colour the trees paint are largely disregarded by us, or worse. We cut down these and other trees, to make way for more and more blocks of concrete and steel.

How different is this from the near-worship accorded to the cherry tree in Japan whose seasonal blossoming is an efflorescence of almost mystical enrapture, drawing visitors from across the country and from far off parts of the world.

Similarly, in America's fall, when the deciduous woods of the north Atlantic coast are alight with the autumnal embers of brilliant reds and browns, visitors from distant lands come to witness the changing of colours on the palette of nature.

Our varied geography, ranging from the high alpine to the lush tropical, hosts amazing arboreal wealth, from the sub-Himalayan conifers to the amaltas and gulmohur of the north, and the flame of the forest, and the majestic raintrees of the Deccan.

If we were to create arboretums, parks devoted to the variety of indigenous trees, like Japan's cherry blossoms and America's fall woodlands, they could well become a travel destination. But much more than that, such parks could not only provide sylvan sanctuaries from urban squalor but also help to make us realise how interlinked our lives are with the lives of our trees.

The word tree is derived from the Old English 'treow', which also means trust or promise. Trees are repositories of faith, living temples made not of stone and brick, but sap, and root, and leaf, and flower. Trees are worthy of our reverence. The question is are we, transgressors of a latter-day Eden, worthy of honouring them.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/tree-temples-gulmohurs-amaltas-and-other-species-could-become-a-major-tourist-attraction-and-much-more-than-just-that/>