

Ficus elastica

Common name: Indian Rubber Tree

Family: Moraceae

Habit: Tree

Location: Botanical Garden, Science Block and Playground

Distribution: It is native to India, Nepal, Burma, China, Malaysia and Indonesia. It is also found in Sri Lanka, West Indies, Australia and USA.

Description: It is a large tree in the banyan group of figs, growing to 30–40 m rarely up to 60 m tall, with a stout trunk up to 2 m (6 ft 7 in) in diameter. The trunk develops aerial and buttressing roots to anchor it in the soil and help support heavy branches. It has broad shiny oval leaves 4–14 inch long and 2–6 inch broad; leaf size is largest on young plants (occasionally to 45 cm or 17+½ in long), much smaller on old trees (typically 10 cm or 4 in long). The leaves develop inside a sheath at the apical meristem, which grows larger as the new leaf develops. When it is mature, it unfurls and the sheath drops off the plant. Inside the new leaf, another immature leaf is waiting to develop.

Uses: *Ficus elastica* or rubber plant, is mainly preferred in households and offices as a decorative element for interiors. It improves indoor air quality and sleep. It has anti-inflammatory properties. Packed full of vitamins and rich in sugar the fruit of the it contains a substance called mucilage which is also present in Aloe Vera plant and some cactus. It is very helpful with a host of stomach problems such as nausea, general pain or digestive problems.

