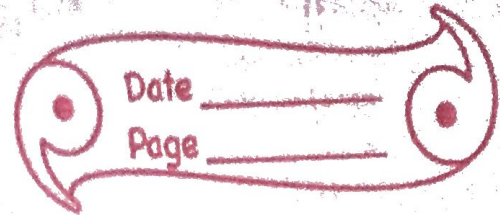


Banyan Tree



national tree of India is the banyan tree. It often refers specifically to the banyan or *Ficus benghalensis*. The plant starts its life as an epiphyte (a plant growing on another plant). The leaves of the banyan tree are large and they are glossy green and elliptical in shape. The leaf bud is covered by large scales. The huge tree of banyan overtops its neighbor and has the widest reaching roots of all trees. Its size and leafy shelter are valued in India as a place of rest and reflection. The banyan tree is considered sacred. It is also known as barqad, Vata vrishth, and Barh.