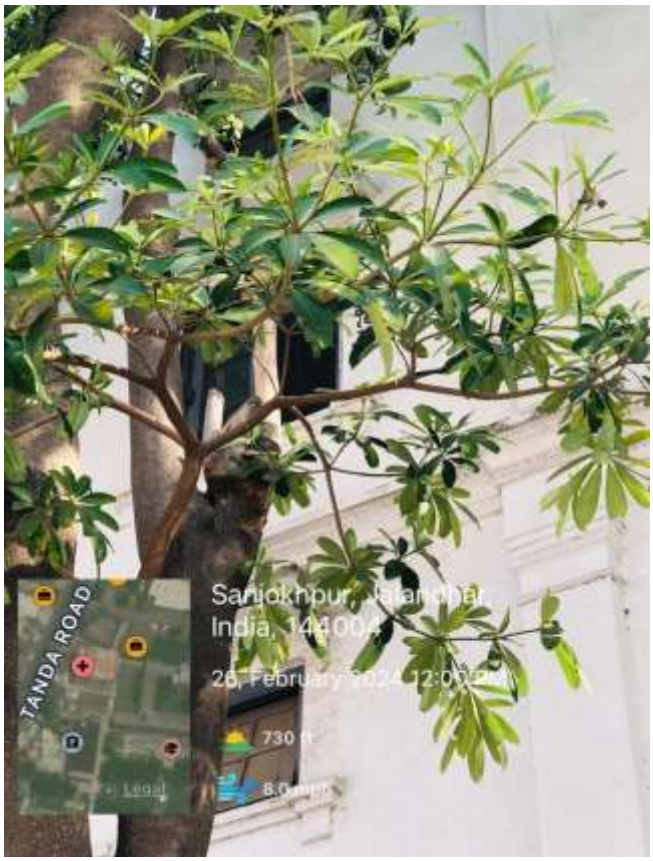
# *Alstonia scholaris*

**Common name:** Devil's Tree, Scholar Tree, Blackboard tree
**Family:** Apocynaceae
**Habit:** Tree
**Location:** Science Block
**Distribution:** It is native to southern China, tropical Asia (mainly the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia) and Australasia, where it is a common ornamental plant.

**Description:**
*Alstonia scholaris* is a glabrous tree and grows up to 40 m (130 ft) tall. Its mature bark is grayish and its young branches are copiously marked with lenticels. The upper side of the leaves are glossy, while the underside is greyish. Leaves occur in whorls of three to ten; petioles are 1–3 cm; the leathery leaves are narrowly obovate to very narrowly spathulate, base cuneate, apex usually rounded and up to 23 cm (9.1 in) long by up to 8 cm (3.1 in) in width. Lateral veins occur in 25 to 50 pairs, at 80–90° to midvein. Cymes are dense and pubescent; peduncle is 4–7 cm long. Pedicels are usually as long as or shorter than calyx. The corolla is white and tube-like, 6–10 mm; lobes are broadly ovate or broadly obovate, 2–4.5 mm, overlapping to the left. The ovaries are distinct and pubescent. The follicles are distinct and linear. Flowers bloom in the month October. The flowers are very fragrant. Seeds of are oblong, with ciliated margins, and ends with tufts of hairs 1.5–2 cm. The bark is almost odorless and very bitter, with abundant bitter and milky sap.

**Uses:**
The species name *scholaris* refers to the fact that the timber of this tree has traditionally been used to make wooden slates for school children. The wood is too soft for making anything - so it is usually used in making packing boxes, blackboards etc. Unverified information Its bark, known as Dita Bark, is used in traditional medicine to treat dysentery and fever. In Ayurveda it is used as a bitter and as an astringent herb for treating skin disorders, malarial fever, urticaria, chronic dysentery, diarrhea, in snake bite and for upper purification process of Panchakarma. The Milky juice of the tree is applied to ulcers.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