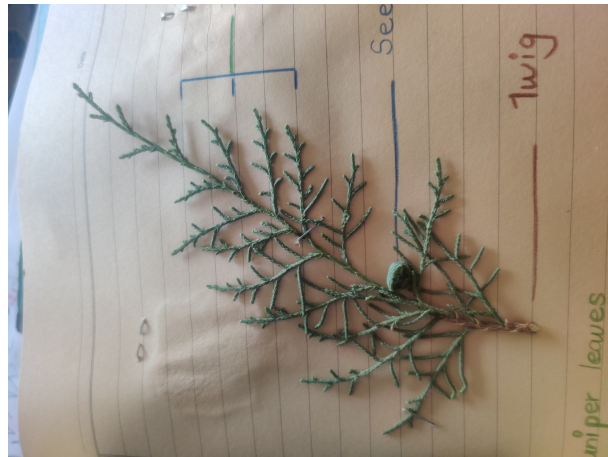


JUNIPER OF LADAKH

Juniperus spp.



Scientific name: *Juniperus* spp.

Common name: Himalayan Juniper / Juniper

Local name: Shukpa

Family: Cupressaceae

Habit: Evergreen coniferous shrub or small tree

Plant Description

Juniper is an evergreen, aromatic conifer adapted to the cold, dry and high-altitude environment of Ladakh. It has branched woody stems covered with small, closely arranged green leaves. The foliage remains green

throughout the year and produces a characteristic resinous aroma when crushed.

Leaves

- Small, narrow or scale-like leaves.
- Arranged closely along the young branches.
- Green to greyish-green in colour.
- Aromatic and resinous.

Fruits / Seed Cones

Juniper does not produce a true botanical berry; the fleshy berry-like structures are modified seed cones. Young cones are generally green, while mature cones may become dark bluish to blackish and contain seeds.

Traditional Uses

- Used traditionally in Ladakh and Himalayan communities for religious and cultural purposes.
- Aromatic branches may be used as incense during traditional practices.
- The plant has a long history of traditional use in Himalayan herbal practices.
- Valued for its aromatic and resinous properties.

Ecological Importance

Juniper is well adapted to high-altitude and cold desert ecosystems. It contributes to biodiversity, provides shelter for small organisms, and helps protect fragile mountain soils.

Conservation

Juniper grows slowly and can take many years to recover from cutting. Overharvesting of branches and trees, habitat disturbance, and increasing environmental pressure can threaten natural populations.

Identification note: The exact species cannot be reliably confirmed from these photographs alone. Therefore, *Juniperus* spp. is used here unless the species has been confirmed by a botanist or herbarium specimen.