### Chaami and Buddu find a plant with left-handedness

“...Oh, No! This looks bad ....why am I not able to write properly?...”. Chaami was doing her homework and felt desperate - not because she could not complete her homework easily, but because of her inability to write with her left hand. That day she had the strange idea of writing with her left hand and was trying it out. However, as she was used to writing with her right hand, she found it difficult to hold the pencil with her left hand. But she still tried writing a paragraph and ended up scribbling something that was not easy to read. Her otherwise beautiful handwriting looked awful. Frustrated with her failure, she went to her father for some solace. She was sobbing.

Her father was in his study. He sensed that Chaami was not her usual self. He took her on to his lap and tried to comfort her. Showing him the homework book and pointing at the differently sized alphabet, Chaami complained “...Look at this Daddy... I tried writing a paragraph with my left hand, but the writing looks so bad.... Why is it so? ...Why is it difficult to write with my left hand? ...I have seen one of my classmates writing comfortably with his left hand...“ She stopped and looked at him for consoling words.

Cuddling her fondly, her father said in a convincing tone. “...Nothing to worry my dear. It is more out of practice that we use our right hand; however, a few others are comfortable with their left hand unlike us. Your friend is one of that sort...” But Chaami was not convinced. She asked again, "... Then why the left hand writing is seen only with a few? ..." Her father had an answer. “...The scientists say that in some people the part of the brain that controls the left side of the body is more active than the part that controls the right side. That is why left hand writing is seen only with a few...” Chaami appeared convinced. That was a news to her. Her father continued “... Don’t be surprised Chaami, this left-handedness is seen in some plants too...”. Chaami could not believe that. “...Left-handedness in plants!... Don’t joke Papa,” - she said in a tone that readily reflected her disbelief and surprise. Recognising her disbelief her father said, “...It’s indeed true my dear... I shall show you one such plant. Wait for me here...”. Saying so, he disappeared in to the kitchen and came back soon. When he returned, there were two curious looking objects in his hand. They looked like the broken bits of a pencil, as long as her thumb, but they were twisted.  

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**COLOUR AND IDENTIFY THE PLANT**

My name
*Helicteres isora*

**My nick names**
- Mrigashringa,
- Yedamuri,
- Valampiri,
- Muradasinge,
- Tirukupalai,
- Peddashamala,
- East Indian screw tree

**How to identify me?**
You can find my fruit spirally twisted and cylindrical.

**Colour Palette**
- Stem - greyish brown
- Bud - brown
- Leaves - dark green
- Fruits - greyish brown
- Flowers - crimson red

Story Line - Shaalmala
Line drawing - Suma
Illustrations - V K Acharya
Design - Santosh
How do I look?
I am a large shrub. My bark is greyish brown. Leaves are elliptic, ovate and pointed at the apex. My flowers are brick red fading to grey. They can be found single in each node & also in clusters.

Where is my home?
I am found in almost all districts.

How am I used?
My fruit are used to treat wounds and stomach upset. It is tied to the cradle of an infant in many parts of South Karnataka, to make it readily available in case of colic pain in the infant.

Hey kids!! Did you like the children's page? Please write to us

How to play with me?
My fruit can be used as eardrops for your dolls. You can paint them with any oil colour of your choice. A long string of such painted fruit can be hung anywhere in your room.

How to multiply me?
I can be multiplied easily through seeds as well as through cuttings. You can cut my branch and plant it anywhere you want. You can sow my seeds during July and August.
Showing them to Chaami, her father explained. "...Look at these Chaami. These are the fruit of a plant your Granny had brought for the sake of your healthcare when you were an infant. They were lying in the kitchen all these days. Now, look at these fruit twisted in two different directions. One is twisted to the right while the other to the left. This twisting occurs naturally on the plant. This fruit, which is twisted to the left, exhibits left-handedness. In simple terms one appears as the mirror image of the other. It's like your left hand looks like your right hand in the mirror...are you convinced now?..." He stopped.

Chaami was silent, as she had gone in to her dream world. While her father explained, she imagined herself standing in front of a mirror looking at her own image. She was amused to see two Chaamis facing each other, each one appearing as the mirror image of the other.

Chaami came out of her dream when her father shook her and said, "Don't you think they are nice Chaami, You can use these fruit for your playtime too...these can serve as the ear hangings for your dolls...". Convinced by his explanation, Chaami took those fruit and went into her room. She was too delighted to discover the left-handedness in plants through those twisted fruits. When she wore them as the ear hangings, they matched her well. Overflowing with joy, she asked her father what that plant was. Instead of telling its name, he told her its identification features and asked her to locate the plant among the bushes near the garden lands. Chaami sensed a challenge in his voice and readily agreed to do so.

Later in the evening as usual when Buddu came to play, she showed him those left-handed fruit. It was equally inviting to him. Both of them agreed to go in search of that plant near the garden lands. It was the same place where they had earlier sighted the balloon vine. After a careful search, they sighted a bush matching the features told by her Daddy. It was a plant that bore rough leaves, bright orange flowers and the same left-handed fruit. Examining a fruit-bearing twig from a close distance, the bewildered kids exclaimed in a chorus, "What is this curious plant called?" Before they could utter anything further, there came a pleasant voice from the direction of the plant (what did the kids hear...? Turn to page 12)