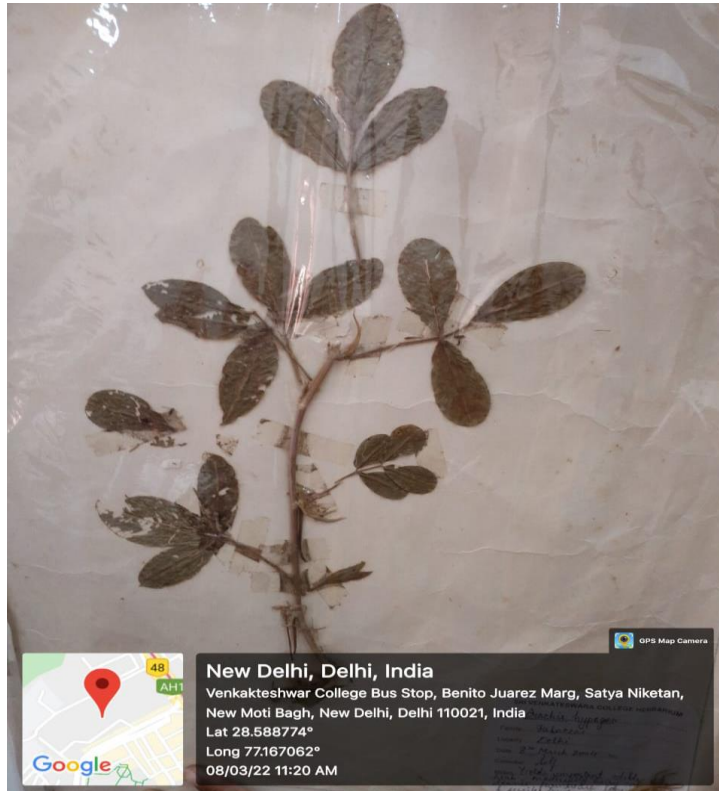


# *Arachis hypogea*



**Common Name:** Groundnut

**Scientific Name:** *Arachis hypogea*

**Family:** Fabaceae

Groundnut, a native to Brazil, is an important source of oil. It is widely distributed throughout South America.

It is a low growing annual herb, attaining a height of 0.3- 0.6 m. The leaves are quadrifoliate with two pairs of leaflets on a slender, grooved petiole. The flower-bearing branches are thrust underground after fertilisation, and the formation of fruit doesn't take place until the ovary is pushed under the soil. The fruit is an elongated, oblong, indehiscent pod, containing one to three seeds (sometimes more). The seeds are ovoid or cylindrical, with a brick-red or rust coloured seed coat.

**Economically Important Part:** Seeds.

**Economic Importance:** Groundnut oil is predominantly used for culinary purposes. It is used extensively for the manufacture of 'vegetable ghee' by hydrogenation. Medicinally, oil is used as a laxative and emollient. The oil is also used in soap-making, in leather dressings, furniture, creams and in making shaving creams, cold creams, pomades, candles, glycerine and tallow substitutes. The oil cake is used as feed for cattle and other farm animals, and as manure.