

**Come! Let's go to the...**

# 12 FORESTS OF VRINDAVAN



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**On the western side of the Yamuna, there are seven forests:**

- 1) Madhavana**
- 2) Talavana**
- 3) Kumudavana**
- 4) Bahulavana**
- 5) Kamyavana**
- 6) Khadiravana**
- 7) Vrindavana**

**On the eastern bank of the River Yamuna, there are five forests:**

- 8) Bhadravana**
- 9) Bilvavana (Baelvan)**
- 10) Lohavana (Lauhavana)**
- 11) Bhandiravana**
- 12) Mahavana**

# Madhuvana



**Did you know?** Lord Krishna appeared in Madhuvana in all four yugas. In Satya-yuga He appeared before Dhruva Maharaja. In Treta-yuga He came as Satrugna and killed the demon Lavanasura. He came as Lord Krishna in Dwapara-yuga and as Lord Caitanya in Kali-yuga.

## STORY:

### **KING AMBARISH**

Maharaj Ambarīsa always engaged his mind in meditating upon the lotus feet of Krsna and all his desires in serving the Lord, twenty-four hours a day. He engaged all his senses in serving the Lord. Ambarish Maharaja performed meditation and austerities in the forest of Madhuvana in Satya-yuga.

Once, Maharaja Ambarish made a vow to stay in Braja Mandala for one year and strictly followed the Ekadasi vrata without water. On Dvadashi, there was only a short time after sunrise in which it was auspicious to break his fast. Maharaja Ambarish worshipped the Lord and was just about to take grains that had been offered to the Supreme Lord, when Maharishi Durvasa arrived. With great respect, the king



invited the sage to join him. The maharishi said, "I accept your invitation, but I first need to finish my daily duties. I will go to the bank of Yamuna; please wait until I return." Saying this, the sage went to the Yamuna.

However, Maharishi Durvasa's return was slightly delayed, and the auspicious time was about to pass. After consulting with the brahmanas and his ministers, Maharaja Ambarish took a drop of the water that washed the Supreme Lord's feet in order to protect his fast.

When Maharishi Durvasa returned, he was furious, knowing well that Maharaja Ambarish had broken the fast without him. He pulled a matted lock of hair from his head and transformed it into a fiery demoness called Kritya, who was ready to burn Ambarish to ashes. However, Maharaja Ambarish simply stood there fearlessly with folded hands. The Sudarshan chakra, the protector of the devotees, immediately appeared and burnt Kritya to ashes. Sudarshan chakra then leapt towards Maharishi Durvasa, who swiftly ran everywhere to save his life.

He even went to Brahmaloak and Shivalok, but no one in those places





could save him. Wherever he went, he saw the frightening Sudarshan chakra pursuing him. Finally, Maharishi Durvasa came to Narayan in Vaikunthalok and desperately cried out: "Help, save me, protect me!" Bhagvan Shri Narayan said, "I am under the control of My devotees. You should at once return to Ambarish and plead for forgiveness. Sudarshan chakra can be pacified by his prayer only, and not by any other means."

For one full year, the great devotee Ambarish Maharaja remained standing there, waiting for Durvasa and praying for the sage's welfare. Upon returning from Vaikuntha, the perturbed Durvasa begged Maharaja Ambarish for his life. Ambarish Maharaja pacified Sudarshan chakra by offering prayers to him and then satisfied the sage by respectfully presenting him an array of delicious prasadam.

Durvasa Muni became astonished to witness the glories of Maharaja Ambarish.



## PRINCE DHRUVA'S AUSTERITIES

Once a prince named Dhruva, arrived at Madhuvana, took his bath in the River Yamuna and observed fasting in the night with great care and attention. After that, as advised by the great sage Narada, he engaged himself in meditating on the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

He performed austerities as follows:

First month: Dhruva Maharaja ate only fruits and berries on every third day, only to keep his body and soul together, and in this way he progressed in his worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Second month: Dhruva Maharaja ate only every six days, and for his eatables he took dry grass and leaves.

Third month: He drank water only every nine days. Thus he remained completely in trance and worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Fourth month: Dhruva Maharaja's became a complete master of the breathing exercise, and thus he inhaled air only every twelfth day.





Fifth month: Maharaja Dhruva controlled his breathing so perfectly that he was able to stand on only one leg, just as a column stands, without motion, and concentrated his mind fully on the Parabrahman. He completely controlled his senses and their objects, and in this way he fixed his mind upon the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without diversion to anything else. When Dhruva Maharaja thus captured the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the refuge of the total material creation and who is the master of all living entities, the three worlds began to tremble.

When Dhruva Maharaja became practically one in heaviness with Lord Vishnu, the total consciousness, due to his fully concentrating, and closing all the holes of his body, the total universal breathing became choked up, and all the great demigods in all the planetary systems felt suffocated and thus took shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Vishnu, the Personality of Godhead

then got on the back of Garuda, who carried Him to the Madhavana forest to see His servant Dhruva. Dhruva's meditation broke and he then saw in front of him, Lord Vishnu.

After seeing the beautiful form of Lord Vishnu in front of him, Dhruva Maharaj thought that the desires which he had in mind were just pieces of glass and now he had got the diamond (The Lord had appeared in front of him), so no more he had the desire of gaining a great kingdom.



## **KILLING OF MADHU AND LAVANASURA**

In the Ramayana of Valmiki it is described that there was a demon named Madhu. This demon was always irreligious and demonic in nature. This demon wandered around and eventually came to Braja. He built himself a small kingdom here and called it Madhuvana. His family was also demoniac. They would not allow any sages or rishis to come and mediate in this area nor would they allow anyone to come and take bath in the Yamuna or to drink water from the Yamuna. They would harass the yogis and sages at every opportunity.

These sages went to Ramacandra in Ayodhya and requested Him to help them. Lord Rama said he would go and slay the demons. His younger brother Satrughna volunteered to go kill the demons. Satrughna said he would go kill the demon Madhu, his wife Mayadana and their son Lavanasura. At this time he requested the Deity of Varahadeva to worship, that Lord Rama had gotten after defeating Ravana at Lanka. Before leaving Ayodhya, Satrughna was told that Lavanasura had many mystical weapons and if he had these weapons with him, then he would be almost unconquerable.

When Satrughna arrived in Mathura he went into the forest to search for Lavanasura. He then saw a huge ferocious man, Lavanasura, who was carrying several tigers, a water buffalo, an elephant, a big fat snake



and a crocodile. This was going to be his dinner. Satrughna challenged him to a fight. Lavanasura told him to wait a few minutes and he would go get his weapons. Satrughna said that, you have a spear in your hand, that is enough. Satrughna then killed Lavanasura after a great fight. He then killed Madhu and Mayadana. After this he converted Madhuvana to Madhupuri and this became his capital.

### **QUIZ TIME:**

**Answer in one word:-**

- 1) Finally who could save Durvasa Muni from Sudarshan Chakra? Ans: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) For how many months did Dhruva Maharaj perform austerities? Ans: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Who killed the demon, Lavanasura? Ans: \_\_\_\_\_

# Talavana

## STORY:

### **THE KILLING OF DHENUKASURA**

Once most intimate friends of Krishna and Balarama: Sridama, Subala and Stokakrishna began to address Krishna and Balarama with great love and affection thus: 'Dear Balarama, You are very powerful; Your arms are very strong. Dear Krishna, You are very expert in killing all kinds of disturbing demons. The Talavana forest is full of palm trees, and all the trees are filled with fruits. But a demon is present there in the form of an ass, and he is surrounded by similar demon friends who assume the same shape. All of them are very strong, so it is very difficult to approach this place. Dear brothers, You are the only persons who can kill such demons. Dear







Krishna, to tell You frankly, we are very attracted by this sweet aroma. Dear Balarama, let us all go there and enjoy these fruits.’ When Balarama and Krishna were thus petitioned by Their smiling intimate friends, They were inclined to please them, and They began to proceed towards the forest, surrounded by all Their friends. Immediately upon entering the Talavana forest, Balarama began to yank the trees with His arms, exhibiting the strength of an elephant. Because of this jerking, all the ripe fruits fell down on the ground. Upon hearing the sound of the falling fruits, the demon Dhenukasura, who was living there in the form of an ass, began to approach with great force, shaking the whole field so that all the trees began to move as if there were an earthquake. The demon appeared first before Balarama and began to kick His chest with his hind legs. At first, Balarama did not say anything, but the demon with great anger began to kick Him again more vehemently. This time Balarama immediately caught hold of the legs of the ass with one hand and wheeling him around threw him into the treetops. The

demon’s body was so heavy that the palm tree fell upon other trees, and several fell down. It appeared as

if a great hurricane had passed through the forest, and all the trees were falling down, one after another. After the demon was thrown into the trees, all the friends and associates of Dhenukasura immediately assembled and attacked Balarama and Krishna with great force. They were determined to retaliate and avenge the death of their friend. But Krishna and Balarama began to catch each of the asses by the hind legs and, exactly in the same way, wheel them around. Thus They killed all of them by throwing them into the palm trees. Because of the dead bodies of the asses, there was a panoramic scene. It appeared as if clouds of various colours were assembled in the trees.

**WORDSEARCH: Search for Krishna and Balaram in the box:-**

I	G	W	P	V	K	Q	Z	C	S	M	I	Q	O	Y	K	H	C	X	U
K	G	K	V	B	M	M	Q	S	F	J	U	A	I	C	P	X	X	Z	H
W	F	V	Z	P	Z	W	C	U	Z	K	C	E	S	L	H	Z	O	Q	Y
I	T	O	U	E	G	B	O	L	G	A	W	D	J	H	N	E	T	Y	P
B	R	P	M	A	I	I	K	G	V	B	A	L	A	R	A	M	K	U	R
K	Q	N	M	A	T	S	P	A	D	M	O	H	A	N	H	S	I	R	K



# *Kumudavana*

Lord Krishna and his friends would come and play in this forest. Kumuda means “bright red water-lilies”. During Krishna’s time, beautiful water lilies grew here, in abundance. That is why this forest got the name ‘Kumudavana’. This is the smallest of the 12 forests.



# Bahulavana

## PICTURE STORY:

### CHARACTERS:



- DHARMARAJA



- LION



- COW – BAHULA



- CALF



- KRISHNA



## BAHULA, THE TRUTHFUL COW



once took the form of a



and approached the



named 'Bahula' to eat her.



requested that she first be allowed to feed her



some milk. She promised that she

would return. The



relented and the



went off to feed her



. When she

returned she found that



had appeared there and the



was really



.

It is stated in the Mathura-mahatmya by Rupa Gosvami that Bahula became one of Krishna's wives because she displayed the good quality of truthfulness. It is said that Lord Krishna would come here with Balarama and the cowherd boys to tend the cows.

# Kamyavana

One morning, Kṛṣṇa went to play with His cowherd boyfriends on the top of the Govardhana Hill. They were imitating the play of thieves and police. Some of the boys became police constables, and some became thieves, and some took the role of lambs. While they were thus enjoying their childhood pastimes, a demon known by the name of Vyomāsura, "the demon who flies in the sky," appeared on the scene. He was the son of another great demon named Maya. These demons can perform wonderful magic. Vyomāsura took the part of a cowherd boy playing as thief and stole many boys who were playing the parts of lambs. One after another he took away almost all the boys and put them in the caves of the mountain and sealed the mouths of the caves with stones. Kṛṣṇa could understand the trick the demon was playing; therefore He caught hold of him exactly as a lion catches hold of a lamb. The demon tried to expand himself like a hill to escape arrest, but Kṛṣṇa did not allow him to get out of His clutches. He was immediately thrown on the ground with great force and killed, just as an animal is killed in the slaughterhouse. After killing the Vyoma demon, Lord Kṛṣṇa released



all His friends from the caves of the mountain. He was then praised by His friends and by the demigods for these wonderful acts. He again returned to Vṛndāvana with His cows and friends.

Across the road from the rock slide and Vyomasura's cave is Bhojan Sthali. This is where Krishna would take lunch with the cowherd boys. There are imprints of the bowls and plates that are said to have been used by Krishna, embedded into the rock at this place.



**COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:-**

- 1) Vyomāsura took the part of a \_\_\_\_\_ playing as thief and stole many boys who were playing the parts of lambs.
- 2) After killing the Vyoma demon, Lord Kṛṣṇa released all His \_\_\_\_\_ from the caves of the mountain.
- 3) Kamyavana is where \_\_\_\_\_ would take lunch with the cowherd boys.
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ was immediately thrown on the ground with great force and killed.
- 5) Kṛṣṇa went to play with His cowherd boyfriends on the top of the \_\_\_\_\_ Hill.
- 6) One after another Vyomasura took away almost all the boys and put them in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the mountains.



# *Khadiravana*

## STORY:

### **KRISHNA KILLS BAKASURA**

All the cowherd boys would daily go to the banks of the River Yamuna to water their calves. Usually, when the calves drank water from the Yamuna, the boys also drank. One day, after drinking, when they were sitting on the bank of the river, they saw a huge animal that looked something like a duck and was as big as a hill. Its top was as strong as a thunderbolt. When they saw that unusual animal, they became afraid of it.

The name of this beast was Bakasura, and he was a friend of Kamsa. He appeared on the scene suddenly and immediately attacked Krishna with his pointed, sharp beak and quickly swallowed Him up. When Krishna was thus swallowed, all the boys, headed by Balarama, became almost breathless, as if they had died. But when the Bakasura demon was swallowing up Krishna, he felt a burning fiery sensation in his throat. This was due to the glowing effulgence of Krishna. The demon quickly threw Krishna up and tried to kill Him by pinching Him in his beaks. Bakasura did not know that although Krishna was playing the part

of a child of Nanda Maharaja, He was still the original father of Lord Brahma, the creator of this universe.

The child of mother Yasoda, who is the reservoir of pleasure for the demigods and who is the maintainer of saintly persons, caught hold of the beaks of the great gigantic duck, and before His cowherd boyfriends, bifurcated his mouth, just as a child very easily splits a blade of grass. From the sky, the denizens of the heavenly planets showered flowers like the cameli, the most fragrant of all flowers, as a token of their congratulations. Accompanying the showers of flowers was a vibration of bugles, drums and conchshells.





# Vrindavana



Shrila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakur explains how the Vrindavana forest pleases all of the transcendental senses of Lord Shri Govinda: *“Lord Krishna saw that the Vrindavana forest was giving pleasure to all the five senses. The bees, birds and animals made charming sounds that brought sweet pleasure to the ears. The wind was faithfully rendering service to the Lord by blowing throughout the forest, carrying the cool moisture of a transcendental lake, and thus giving pleasure to the sense of touch. By the sweetness of the wind, even the sense of taste was being stimulated, and the fragrance of lotus flowers was bringing pleasure to the nostrils, and the entire forest was endowed with heavenly beauty, which was giving spiritual bliss to the eyes.”*





# Bhadrawana

## STORY:

### **KRISHNA KILLS VATSASURA**

Once, when Krishna and Balarama were playing on the bank of the Yamuna, a demon of the name Vatsasura assumed the shape of a calf and came there intending to kill the brothers. By taking the shape of a calf, the demon could mingle with other calves. Krishna, however, specifically noticed this, and He immediately told Balarama about the entrance of the demon. Both brothers then followed him and sneaked up upon him.

Krishna caught hold of the demon-calf by the two hind legs and tail, whipped him around very forcibly and threw him up into a tree. The demon lost his life and fell down from the top of the tree to the ground.

When the demon lay dead on the ground, all the playmates of Krishna congratulated Him, 'Well done, well done,' and the demigods in the sky began to shower flowers with great satisfaction.



# *Bilvavana*

Bilva is another name for Bela tree or Bela fruit. Laxmi devi resides in this forest. This is the reason this forest is also called Srivana (as Laxmi devi's another name is Sri). Krsna and Balarama would come to this forest, eat bela fruit and have picnics with friends.



# Lohavana

This Lohavan is also the battlefield where Krsna fought and defeated Jarasandha. Today we heard that each time Jarasandha was defeated by Krsna he would return home, gather a new army, and engage Brahmans to perform yajnas, etc, to hopefully ensure victory against the Lord. However, he was defeated 17 times by the Him. After the 17th time, Jarasandha threatened to kill the Brahmans if he again lost the fight. So, the Brahmans wrote to Krsna and asked His help. This is one of the reasons why Krsna chose to run away from the 18th battle against Jarasandha and earn Himself the name Ranachora.

## STORY:

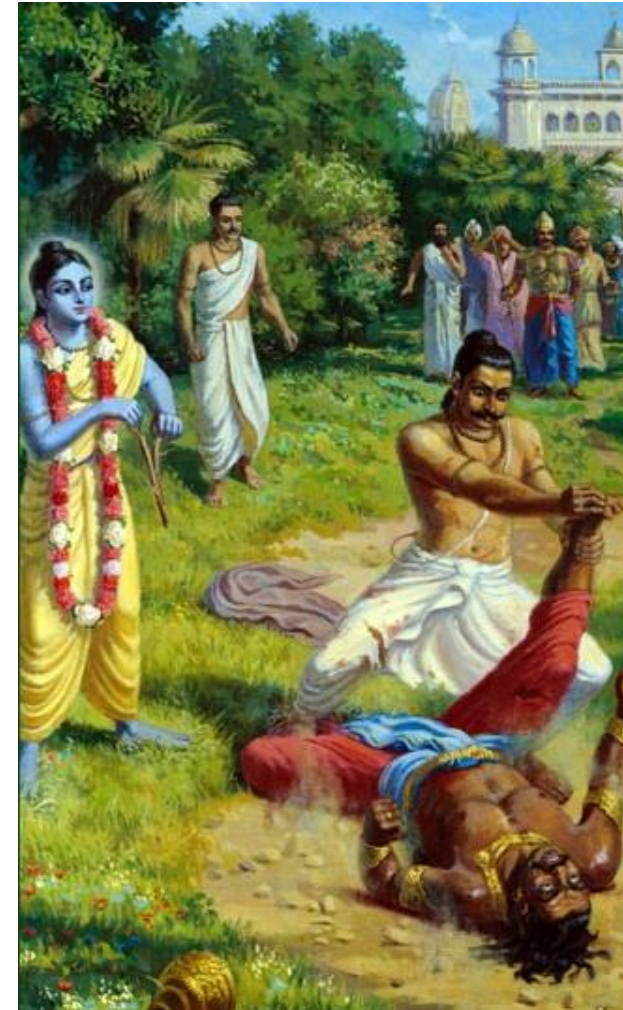
### **BHIMA KILLS JARASANDHA**

Jarāsandha was a relative of Kaṁsa, the maternal uncle of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore after Kaṁsa's death King Jarāsandha became a great enemy of Kṛṣṇa, and there were many fights between Jarāsandha and Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa wanted to kill him, but He also wanted that those who served as military men for Jarāsandha might not be killed. Therefore a plan was adopted to kill him. Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma and Arjuna together went to Jarāsandha in the dress of poor *brāhmaṇas* and begged charity from King Jarāsandha. Jarāsandha never refused charity to any *brāhmaṇa*, and he performed many sacrifices also, yet he was not on a par with devotional service. Lord Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma and Arjuna asked Jarāsandha for the facility of fighting him, and it was settled that Jarāsandha would fight with Bhīma only. So all of them were both guests and combatants of Jarāsandha, and Bhīma and Jarāsandha fought every day for several days. Bhīma became disappointed,



but Kṛṣṇa gave him hints about Jarāsandha's being joined together as an infant, and thus Bhīma dissected him again and so killed him. All the kings who were detained in the concentration camp to be killed before Mahābhairava were thus released by Bhīma. Feeling thus obliged to the Pāṇḍavas, they paid tribute to King Yudhiṣṭhira.

**Q. Find 7 differences**  
**between the two pictures**  
**of Bhima killing**  
**Jarasandha:-**



# Bhandiravana

## STORY:

### **KILLING THE DEMON, PRALAMBASURA**

Balarama and Krishna along with Their friends played all kinds of sports and enjoyed the soothing atmosphere of Vrindavana, full of rivers, lakes, rivulets, fine trees and excellent fruits and flowers.





Once while They were engaged in Their transcendental pastimes, a demon of the name Pralambasura entered Their company, desiring to kidnap both Balarama and Krishna. Krishna began to think how to kill the demon, but externally He received him as a friend. Krishna then called His friends and told them: 'Now we shall challenge one another in pairs.' With this proposal, all the boys assembled together. Some of them took the side of Krishna, and some of them took the side of Balarama, and they arranged to play in duel. The defeated members had to carry the victorious members on their backs. The party of Balarama, accompanied by Sridama and Vrisabha, came out victorious, and Krishna's party had to carry them on their backs through the Bhandiravana forest. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, being defeated, had to carry Sridama on His back, and Bhadrasena carried Vrisabha. Imitating their play, Pralambasura, who appeared there as a cowherd boy, carried Balarama on his back. Pralambasura was the greatest of the demons, and he had calculated that Krishna was the most powerful of the cowherd boys. In order to avoid Krishna, Pralambasura carried Balarama far away. As the great demon carried Balarama, the Lord became as massive as mount Sumeru, and Pralamba had to slow down. Pralambasura then resumed his actual form-an effulgent body that was covered with golden ornaments and that resembled a cloud





flashing with lightning and carrying the moon. When Lord Balarama saw the gigantic body of the demon



as he moved swiftly in the sky-with his blazing eyes, fiery hair, terrible teeth reaching toward his scowling brows, and amazing effulgence generated by his armlets, crown and earrings-the Lord seemed to become a little frightened. Remembering the actual situation, the fearless Balarama understood that the demon was trying to kidnap Him and take Him away from His companions. The Lord then became furious and struck the demon's head with His hard fist, just as Indra, the king of the demigods, strikes a mountain with his thunderbolt weapon. Thus smashed by Balarama's fist, Pralamba's head immediately cracked open. The demon vomited blood from his mouth and lost all consciousness, and then with a great noise he fell lifeless to the ground, like a mountain devastated by Indra. The cowherd boys were most astonished to see how the powerful Balarama had killed the demon Pralamba, and they exclaimed, "Excellent! Excellent!" They offered Balarama profuse benedictions and glorified Him. Their minds overwhelmed with ecstatic love, they embraced Him as if He had returned from the dead.

# Mahavana

Gokula is where Krishna lived in the house of Nanda and Yasoda, along with Balarama. Lord Balarama, the older brother of Krishna, took birth here from Rohini, the wife of Vasudeva. Gokula is in the forest of Mahavana. Vasudeva carried Krishna here from Mathura. He crossed the Yamuna at Kole Ghata. Nanda Maharaja celebrated the birth of Krishna by giving in charity 18 lakhs (1.8 million) cows. Each cow was





wearing a pearl necklace and golden ornaments. He also gave the brahmanas a large amount of jewellery and grains. Garga Muni did the name giving ceremony for Krishna and Balarama very secretly here in a cow barn, so Kamsa would not notice. Krishna spent His early childhood here and had many pastimes here. The pastimes of killing Putana witch, the stealing of butter, and other childhood pastimes took place here.





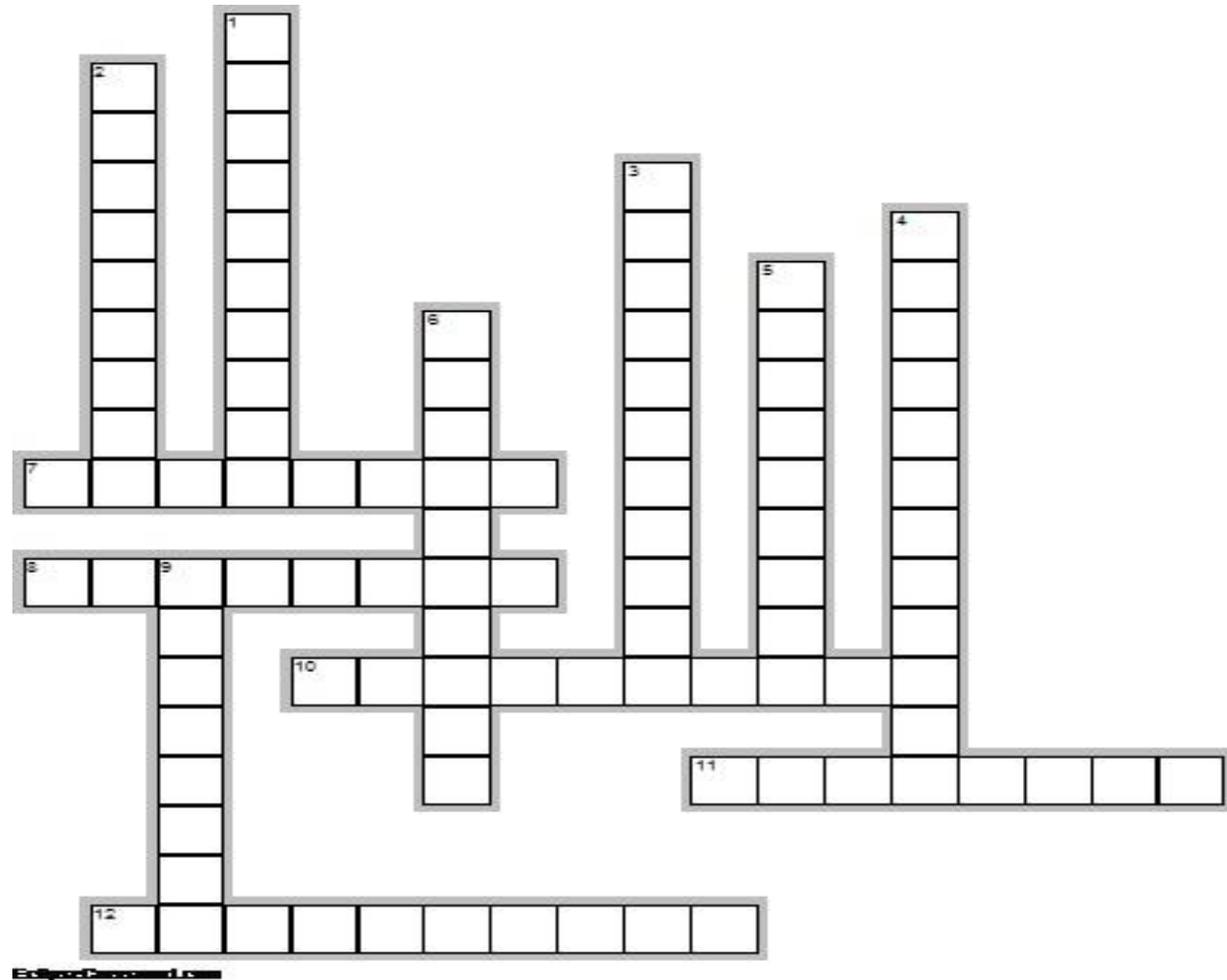
## CROSSWORD

### Across

7. Killing of Putana
8. The forest of bhel Fruits
10. Killing of Vatsasura
11. Killing of Dhenukasura
12. The forest where Bahula, the cow, was tested

### Down

1. Forest of water Lilies
2. Killing of lavanasura
3. Killing of Bakasura
4. Killing of Pralambasura
5. Killing of Vyomasura
6. The forest which gave pleasure to all the senses of the Lord
9. Killing of Jarasandha





# SRI VRAJA-MANDALA

