



Asafoetida

Foul or fair?

Asafoetida is dried gum from the stem and root of giant fennel plants in the genus *Ferula*. These plants grow wild in Afghanistan and neighbouring mountainous areas. Asafoetida almost entirely comes from wild plants as it is difficult to cultivate on farms. It is extracted by making cuts on the stem and top of the root, so the gum exudes out. Asafoetida gum is mixed with flour to stabilise it before sale. Even when diluted in this way, asafoetida is very pungent when raw, but when cooked it gives dishes a savoury onion-like flavour. Indian Brahmins and Jains use asafoetida as a substitute for onions and garlic since these are forbidden for them. Asafoetida helps digestion and is also used in Ayurvedic medicine.

Asafoetida isn't the only plant known for its unpleasant aroma. Do you know which of the plants below smell foul and which ones smell fair? Draw lines to match the plants to the correct label.

