

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Ginkgo biloba

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Ginkgo biloba

from the 100 Herb Syllabus

Description

Ginkgo comes from the Chinese word Ginkyo, meaning silver apricot. Biloba is Latin, bi meaning double, loba meaning lobes. The leaf is fan-shaped, with a split in the middle. The seed has the size and appearance of a small apricot when mature, and has a silvery bloom on the fruit. You can tell a Ginkgo from other conifers by its fan-shaped leaves. The leaves can be between 5-8 centimeters wide. They are a leathery leaf and have a wax layer on both sides. The Ginkgo has a vascular system where the veins divide in two. This vein pattern is unique to the Ginkgo.



A Ginkgo tree can reach 100 feet in height, and 13 feet in diameter. When the tree reaches 100 years old, its canopy starts to spread. The male tree has a slim column form and is slightly longer, while the female tree had a wider crown and a more spread out form.

General

Ginkgo Biloba is one of the oldest living species on the earth. It is the only living representative of the order Ginkgoales, which is a group of gymnosperms composed of the family Ginkgoaceae, dating back about 270 million years.

It was one of the only plants to survive the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima in Japan during World War II. The tree budded after the blast with no deformities. The temple that was next to the tree was destroyed, but the tree remained. In 1994, the temple was rebuilt around the Ginkgo tree. There are a total of 4 Ginkgo trees that survived the nuclear bomb.

Medicinal Uses

Ginkgo has been shown to help improve memory, concentration, mental alertness and mild mood disorders. It has also been shown to help with Alzheimer's disease. Ginkgo helps bring oxygen to the brain, and has a mild, blood thinning effect.

The seeds are used in Eastern medicine; the leaves are used in Western medicine. The seeds are said to help with asthma, coughs, irritability of the bladder, blenorrhoea and uterine fluxes. Eaten

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raw, they are said to be anti-cancer. Cooked, the seeds are said to be peptic and anthelmintic. In Japan, they are used for digestion.

Other Uses

In China, the nuts were served at weddings, feasts, and as a substitute for lotus seeds. In Japan, there were used at tea ceremonies for sweets and desserts, and were also pickled. In the 18th century, Ginkgo nuts became a side dish used when drinking sake. Today, they are served grilled or boiled as chawan-mushi (a pot steamed egg dish), or in nabe-ryori (Japanese fondue).

Cultivation, Collection, Preparation

Ginkgo is generally prepared in liquid extract, herbal capsules, or as tea. Western herbalists utilize the leaves. Eastern herbalists also utilize the fruit.

Toxicity

The fruit of the Ginkgo is mildly toxic. Caution is urged when using Ginkgo if on blood-thinning medication.

Dr. Christopher's Combinations Containing Ginkgo

Memory Plus
MindTrac