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Illicium verum - Hook.f.

Common Name	Ba Jiao Hui Xian
Family	Illiciaceae
Synonyms	
Known Hazards	The fruit is poisonous in quantity[19, 177].
Habitats	Light woodland and thickets[200]. Forests at elevations of 200 - 1600 metres in S and W Guangxi Province, China[266].
Range	E. Asia - China, Vietnam.
Edibility Rating	
Medicinal Rating	
Care	3



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Summary

Physical Characteristics



Illicium verum is an evergreen Tree growing to 5 m (16ft) by 3 m (9ft). It is hardy to zone 8 and is frost tender. It is in leaf 12-Jan It is in flower from Mar to May, and the seeds ripen in October. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs)

Suitable for: light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils and prefers well-drained soil. Suitable pH: acid and neutral soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It prefers moist soil.

Habitats

Woodland Garden Sunny Edge; Dappled Shade; South Wall. By. West Wall. By.

Edible Uses

Edible Parts: [Fruit](#).
Edible Uses:

The fruit is used as a flavouring in curries, teas and pickles[2, 132, 177, 238]. It is an ingredient of 'five spice powder', used in Chinese and Vietnamese cuisine[238]. The fruit is also chewed after meals in order to sweeten the breath[4]. Caution is advised because it is said to be poisonous in quantity[19, 177]. The essential oil is used to flavour liqueurs, soft drinks and bakery products[238].

Medicinal Uses

Plants For A Future can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally.

[Antibacterial](#); [Appetizer](#); [Carminative](#); [Expectorant](#); [Homeopathy](#); [Stimulant](#).

The fruit is antibacterial, carminative, diuretic, odontalgic, stimulant, and stomachic[4, 21, 61, 176, 240]. It is taken internally in the treatment of abdominal pain, digestive disturbances and complaints such as lumbago[176, 238]. It is often included in remedies for digestive disturbances and cough mixtures, in part at least for its pleasant aniseed flavour[238]. An effective remedy for various digestive upsets, including colic, it can be safely given to children[254]. The fruit is also often chewed in small quantities after meals in order to promote digestion and to sweeten the breath[4, 238]. The fruit has an antibacterial affect similar to penicillin[176]. The fruit is harvested unripe when used for chewing, the ripe fruits being used to extract essential oil and are dried for use in decoctions and powders[238]. A homeopathic remedy is prepared from the seed[4].

Other Uses

[Essential](#); [Incense](#).

The pounded bark is used as an incense[4].

Cultivation details

Prefers a light, moist well-drained loam and a sheltered position[1, 11] Prefers a humus-rich lime-free soil[182, 200]. Succeeds in sun or semi-shade[200]. This species is not very cold-hardy, it tolerates temperatures down to between -5 and -10°C and requires a very sheltered position or the protection of a wall when grown in Britain[200]. Chinese anise is extensively cultivated in China for its fruit and medicinal essential oil[200]. It is planted in the grounds of temples in Japan, and also on tombs[4]. Plants seldom grow larger than about 3 metres in Britain, but eventually reach about 18 metres tall in their native habitat[200].

Propagation

Seed - it does not require pre-treatment and can be sown in early spring in a greenhouse[113]. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle and grow them on in the greenhouse for at least their first winter. Plant out in late spring or early summer, after the last expected frosts, and give some protection from the cold over the winter for the first year or two. Layering in early spring. Takes 18 months[78]. Cuttings of half-ripe wood, August in a frame[113]. Pot up the cuttings when they start to root and grow them on in the greenhouse for their first winter, planting out after the last expected frosts.

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Expert comment

Author

Hook.f.

Botanical References

200266

Links / References

[1] **F. Chittendon**. RHS Dictionary of Plants plus Supplement. 1956

Comprehensive listing of species and how to grow them. Somewhat outdated, it has been replaced in 1992 by a new dictionary (see [200]).

[2] **Hedrick. U. P.** Sturtevant's Edible Plants of the World.

Lots of entries, quite a lot of information in most entries and references.

[4] **Grieve**. A Modern Herbal.

Not so modern (1930's?) but lots of information, mainly temperate plants.

[11] **Bean. W.** Trees and Shrubs Hardy in Great Britain. Vol 1 - 4 and Supplement.

A classic with a wealth of information on the plants, but poor on pictures.

[19] **Stary. F.** Poisonous Plants.

Not very comprehensive, but easy reading.

[21] **Lust. J.** The Herb Book.

Lots of information tightly crammed into a fairly small book.

[61] **Usher. G.** A Dictionary of Plants Used by Man.

Forget the sexist title, this is one of the best books on the subject. Lists a very extensive range of useful plants from around the world with very brief details of the uses. Not for the casual reader.

[78] **Sheat. W. G.** Propagation of Trees, Shrubs and Conifers.

A bit dated but a good book on propagation techniques with specific details for a wide range of plants.

[113] **Dirr. M. A. and Heuser. M. W.** The Reference Manual of Woody Plant Propagation.

A very detailed book on propagating trees. Not for the casual reader.

[132] **Bianchini. F., Corbetta. F. and Pistoia. M.** Fruits of the Earth.

Lovely pictures, a very readable book.

[176] **Yeung. Him-Che.** Handbook of Chinese Herbs and Formulas.

An excellent Chinese herbal giving information on over 500 species. Rather technical and probably best suited to the more accomplished user of herbs.

[177] **Kunke. G.** Plants for Human Consumption.

An excellent book for the dedicated. A comprehensive listing of latin names with a brief list of edible parts.

[182]Thomas. G. S. Ornamental Shrubs, Climbers and Bamboos.

Contains a wide range of plants with a brief description, mainly of their ornamental value but also usually of cultivation details and varieties.

[200]Huxley. A. The New RHS Dictionary of Gardening. 1992.

Excellent and very comprehensive, though it contains a number of silly mistakes. Readable yet also very detailed.

[238]Bown. D. Encyclopaedia of Herbs and their Uses.

A very well presented and informative book on herbs from around the globe. Plenty in it for both the casual reader and the serious student. Just one main quibble is the silly way of having two separate entries for each plant.

[240]Chopra. R. N., Nayar. S. L. and Chopra. I. C. Glossary of Indian Medicinal Plants (Including the Supplement).

Very terse details of medicinal uses of plants with a wide range of references and details of research into the plants chemistry. Not for the casual reader.

[254]Chevallier. A. The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants

An excellent guide to over 500 of the more well known medicinal herbs from around the world.

[266] Flora of China

On-line version of the Flora - an excellent resource giving basic info on habitat and some uses.

Readers comment

Elizabeth H.

jp Sun Jan 17 2010

who is growing this plant ?

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