
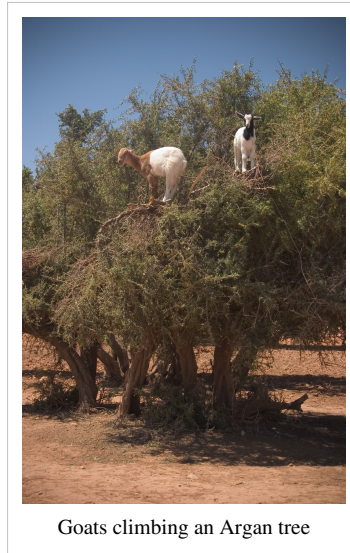


# Argania

For other uses, see Argan (disambiguation).

<i>Argania</i>	
	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Asterids
Order:	Ericales
Family:	Sapotaceae
Subfamily:	Sapotoideae
Tribe:	Sideroxyleae
Genus:	<i>Argania</i> Roem. & Schult.
Species:	<i>A. spinosa</i>
Binomial name	
<i>Argania spinosa</i> (L.) Skeels	
Synonyms	
<i>Argania sideroxylon</i> Roem. & Schult. <i>Sideroxylon spinosum</i> L.	



Goats climbing an Argan tree

The **argan** (*Argania spinosa*) is a species of tree endemic to the calcareous semi-desert Sous valley of southwestern Morocco and to the Algerian region of Tindouf in the western Mediterranean region. It is the sole species in the genus *Argania*.

Argan grows to 8–10 metres high and live up to 150–200 years. They are thorny, with gnarled trunks. The leaves are small, 2–4 cm long, oval with a rounded apex. The flowers are small, with five pale yellow-green petals; flowering is in April. The fruit is 2–4 cm long and 1.5–3 cm broad, with a thick, bitter peel surrounding a sweet-smelling but unpleasantly flavoured layer of pulpy pericarp. This surrounds the very hard nut, which contains one (occasionally two or three) small, oil-rich seeds. The fruit takes over a year to mature, ripening in June to July of the following year.

## Cultivation

In Morocco *arganeraie* forests now cover some 8,280 km<sup>2</sup> and are designated as a UNESCO Biosphere reserve. Their area has shrunk by about half during the last 100 years, owing to charcoal-making, grazing, and increasingly intensive cultivation. The best hope for the conservation of the trees may lie in the recent development of a thriving export market for argan oil as a high-value product. However, the wealth brought by argan oil export has also created threats to argan trees in the form of increased goat population. Locals use the newfound wealth to buy more goats and the goats stunt the growth of the argan trees by climbing up and eating their leaves and fruit.

Argan is also grown in Israel, in the Arabah and Negev.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>

## Uses

In some parts of Morocco, argan takes the place of the olive as a source of forage, oil, timber and fuel in Berber society. Especially near Essaouira, the argan tree is frequently climbed by goats.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Fruit

Argan fruit falls in July, when black and dry. Until this happens, goats are kept out of the argan woodlands by wardens. Rights to collect the fruit are controlled by law and village traditions. The leftover nut is gathered after consumption by goats.

## Argan oil

Main article: Argan oil

Argan oil is produced by several women's co-operatives in the southwestern parts of Morocco. The most labour-intensive part of oil-extraction is removal of the soft pulp (used to feed animals) and the cracking by hand, between two stones, of the hard nut. The seeds are then removed and gently roasted. This roasting accounts for part of the oil's distinctive, nutty flavour.

The traditional technique for oil extraction is to grind the roasted seeds to paste, with a little water, in a stone rotary quern. The paste is then squeezed by hand in order to extract the oil. The extracted paste is still oil-rich and is used as animal feed. Oil produced this way can be stored and used for 3–6 months, and will be produced as needed in a family, from a store of the kernels, which will keep for 20 years unopened. Dry-pressing is becoming increasingly important for oil produced for sale, as this method allows for faster extraction, and the oil produced can be used for 12–18 months after extraction. Wikipedia:Citation needed

The oil contains 80% unsaturated fatty acids, is rich in essential fatty acids and is more resistant to oxidation than olive oil. Argan oil is used for dipping bread, on couscous, salads and similar uses. A dip for bread known as **amlou** is made from argan oil, almonds and peanuts, sometimes sweetened by honey or sugar. The unroasted oil is traditionally used as a treatment for skin diseases, and has become favoured by European cosmetics manufacturers. Wikipedia:Citation needed

Argan oil is sold in Morocco as a luxury item, and is difficult to find for sale outside the region of production. The product is of increasing interest to cosmetics companies in Europe. It used to be difficult to buy the oil outside Morocco, but since 2001–2002 it has become a fashionable product in Europe and North America. It is now widely available in specialist shops and occasionally in supermarkets. Its price (US\$40–50 for 500 ml) is notable compared to other oils. Wikipedia:Citation needed

Argan oil contains: Wikipedia:Citation needed

- 44% Oleic acid
- 30% Alpha-linolenic acid Wikipedia:Citation needed (*Conflicts with table in argan oil*)
- 12% Palmitic acid
- 6% Stearidonic acid
- 5% Linoleic acid Wikipedia:Citation needed (*Conflicts with table in argan oil*)
- 3% Myristic acid

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Foliage, flowers and immature fruit



*Argania spinosa* - MHNT

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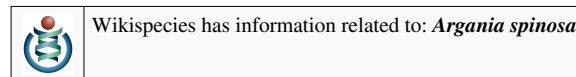
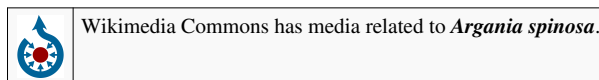
[5] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016%2Fj.ecolecon.2007.06.017>

[6] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080%2F08941920490430205>

[7] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016%2F0921-8009%2802%2900020-4>

[8] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007%2FBF02858970>

## External links



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