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### *Canella winterana*

[Synonyms : *Canella alba*, *Laurus winterana*, *Winterana canella*]

**CANELLA** is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to the West Indies and to southern Florida (United States) it has small fragrant, violet, white or pinkish flowers.

It is also known as Bahama whitewood, Barbasco, Bastard cinnamon, *Cannelle blanche* (French), *Cinnamomo salvatico* (Italian), Cinnamon bark, *Weisser Kaneelbaum* (German), *Weisser Zimmtbaum* (German), West Indian wild cinnamon, White cinnamon, White wood, White wood tree, Wild cinnamon, and *Yabani darçin ağ* (Turkish).

The dried flowers, when softened in warm water, release a musk-like fragrance.

Not only have the Caribbean Indians used the dried bark as a spice or condiment but they have also employed it as a room deodorizer to counter stale tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) smells. In Puerto Rico canella was used as a fish poison.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish explorers believed that the tree was a species of cinnamon (*Cinnamomum*) and when they returned to Europe they introduced it as White cinnamon. It arrived in Britain in 1600.

Today in Jamaica pigeons (themselves destined for the pot) enjoy eating the fruit that give their own flesh a spicy flavour.

The dried bark is used today commercially as a spice, a medicine and a tobacco flavouring. The wood is provides timber on a commercial scale.

Medicinally, herbalists used canella to treat scurvy and also as an ingredient in a purgative, whereas today any medicinal use is likely to be confined to that of a stimulant or tonic.