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*Cinchona*

*Rubiaceae*

In 1638, five years after a Jesuit priest, a Father Calancha, had written about a ‘miraculous cure’ the Viceroy of Peru or his wife succumbed to malaria. The powdered bark of one of these plants, that authorities tell us now would have been most unpleasant to take, was used to achieve his or his wife’s remarkable recovery. The local Indians knew it as *quechua* or *quinquina* meaning ‘bark of bark’ but to commemorate the patient’s return to health the Spaniards christened the plant after his wife, the Countess de Chinchon. Certainly it is a historical fact that the Viceroy sent an expedition into the interior in 1639 to search for this miracle tree and its bark.