

Citrus aurantium subsp. *bergamia*

[Synonyms : *Citrus bergamia*]

BERGAMOT ORANGE is an evergreen shrub or tree. Originating from China it has scented white flowers.

It is also known as *Ba gan meng* (Chinese), *Bei jia mao cheng* (Chinese), Bergamot (English, Russian), *Bergamotier* (French), *Bergamotorange* (Danish), *Bergamotoranje* (Dutch), *Bergamott* (Swedish), *Bergamotta* (Italian, Maltese), *Bergamotte* (German), *Bergamottenbaum* (German), *Bergamottenzitrone* (German), *Bergamotti* (Finnish), *Bergamottier* (French), *Bergamottihedelmä* (Finnish), *Bergamoto* (Italian), *Berugamoto* (Japanese), *Laymûn adâlyâ bamaî* (Arabic), Lemon bergamot, *Limettier bergamotte* (French), *Oranger bergamotte* (French), *Poirier bergamotte* (French), *Strauchorange* (German), *Xiang ning meng* (Chinese), and Yellow orange.

An essential oil is extracted from the skin. 1,000 peels will yield 850 g. of bergamot oil, also known as ‘oil of bigarrade’. Neroli is obtained from the upper surface of the flowers. An essence is obtained from the leaves and flowers.

This is a sub-species of the bitter orange (*Citrus aurantium*).

Aurantium means ‘orange-coloured’. *Bergamia* is derived from the name of a city in Asia Minor, Pergamum.

Bergamot orange, with its orange-like, pale yellow fruit, was introduced to Italy in 1600, where it was grown initially as an ornamental plant. Its cultivation today is confined primarily to a narrow coastal area in Calabria which accounts for 90% of the world’s crop.

Today bergamot oil is used primarily for making perfume and hair oil. It is this essential oil (no connection with bergamot, the North American perennial *Monarda didyma*) that is used to flavour Earl Grey tea, and the drinks industry also uses it for making liqueurs. It offers a commercial flavouring for the confectionery industry and it is used similarly by the tobacco industry as well. Neroli is an ingredient used by the perfumery industry too, especially in eau de cologne. The fruit also offer a commercial ingredient for liqueurs, and they are used by the food industry in marmalades. The remaining pulp serves as cattle fodder.

(*See Also* bitter orange, *Citrus aurantium*.)