

*Gossypium arboreum*

[Synonyms : *Gossypium indicum*, *Gossypium nanking*, *Gossypium obtusifolium*]

**CHINESE COTTON** is a shrub. Possibly originating in Asia (particularly India) from African plants introduced 1000s of years ago, it has deep purple-centred, yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Albero del cotone* (Italian), *Algodoeiro-arbóreo* (Portuguese), *Algodoeiro gigante* (Portuguese), *Algodon asiático* (Spanish), *Algodonero arbóreo* (Spanish), *Arbol del algodón* (Spanish), *Bangaali hathhi* (Kannada), *Baumformige* (German), *Baumwolle* (German), Bluntleaf cotton, *Bomuldstræ* (Danish), *Camparutti* (Malayalam, Tamil), Ceylon cotton, Ceylon tree cotton, *Chemparutti* (Malayalam), *Cotone a fibra corta* (Italian), *Cotone arborescente* (Italian), *Cotonnier arborescent* (French), *Cotonnier de l'Inde* (French), *Cotonnier en arbre* (French), *Cotonnier rouge* (French), Cotton tree, *Diyokapaas* (Hindi), *Fai daeng* (Thai), *Gutn baladi* (Arabic), Indian tree cotton, *Kaapaas* (Hindi), *Kapaas* (Hindi, Nepalese), *Kaattuparutti* (Malayalam), *Kapaas kaa per* (Hindi), *Kapas* (Punjabi), *Karpasamu* (Sanskrit, Telugu), *Katoenboom* (Dutch), *Nurma* (Hindi), Pakistani-Indian cotton, *Paminda pratti* (Telugu), *Parutthi* (Tamil), *Patti* (Telugu), *Raksatika* (Sanskrit), Red flowered cotton tree, *Ruuk kapaas* (Nepalese), *Sembarutti* (Tamil), *Semparutti* (Tamil), Sennar tree cotton, *Shu mian* (Chinese), Tree cotton, and *Vamvaki dendrodes* (Greek).

*Arboreum* is derived from Latin *arbor* (tree) meaning ‘tree-like or tending to be woody’.

In ancient Egypt material made from the fine cotton obtained from the fruit was used to make the priests’ robes. Authorities debate the arrival of cotton processing in Egypt. (Some still believe it only reached there during Roman times and that prior to this Egyptians relied entirely on linen made from flax, *Linum usitatissimum*.)

The dried flowers (which are then dark brown) provide an ingredient for some Thai dishes – and the seeds yield an edible oil.

Medicinally, the root has been used to treat fever and the seeds have been included in remedies for tuberculosis, catarrh, cystitis and some venereal diseases.