

Pimenta racemosa

[Synonyms : *Amomis acris*, *Amomis caryophyllata*, *Amomis caryophyllata* var. *grisea*, *Amomis grisea*, *Amomis pimento*, *Amomis pimento* var. *jamaicensis*, *Amomis pimento* var. *surinamensis*, *Amomis pimentoides*, *Caryophyllus racemosus*, *Myrcia acris*, *Myrcia pimentoides*, *Myrtus acris*, *Myrtus caryophyllata*, *Myrtus caryophyllus*, *Myrtus pimenta*, *Pimenta acris*, *Pimenta acris* var. *grisea*, *Pimenta acris* var. *pimentoides*, *Pimenta acuminata*, *Pimenta pimento*, *Pimenta racemosa* var. *grisea*, *Pimenta racemosa* var. *racemosa*]

BAYBERRY TREE is an evergreen tree. Native to tropical America it has tiny white flowers. It is also known as American myrtle, *Ausú* (Spanish), Bayberry, *Bay boom* (Dutch), Bay leaf tree, Bay oil tree, *Bayölbaum* (German), Bay rum tree, Bay tree, *Bois d'Inde* (French), Celemon bush, Cinnamon tree, *Fèy esans jirof* (Creole), *Girofle* (French), *Kappalamulaku* (Malayalam), *Kattukkarava* (Tamil), Oil of bay, Pimento leaves, *Sinamoni* (Tongan), West Indian clove, Wild cinnamon, and Wild clove.

The leaves are distilled to yield a fragrant brown oil variously known as Oil of Myrcia, Oil of Bay or Oleum Myrciae. 100 lb. of leaves yield about 1 lb. of oil.

Racemosa is derived from Latin *racemus* (cluster) meaning 'with a spike of stalked flowers up the stem'.

The leaves yield the bay oil that can be found in some barbers' shops and in skin conditioners too. Originally the wilted leaves were steeped in rum and water before distillation, which may explain the name 'Bay Rum'. Now the rum is omitted and the solutions used are about 1% of the alcoholic preparation.

Apart from general carpentry, the wood has provided a high quality fuel.

A tincture of the oil is used by the toiletry industry today for scenting toilet soap, shaving soap, Bay rum hair wash and toilet waters. It is also an ingredient used by the perfumery industry in perfume. The wood is made into walking sticks.

Medicinally, powdered fruit have been used in India to treat diarrhoea, indigestion and wind.