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Allspice

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The Caribbean tropical tree, *Pimenta dioica* or *Jamaica pimenta* is used for a variety of human aspires, such as in food spice, as a natural pesticide, perfumery industry, and in folk medicine. *Pimenta dioica* also known as allspice can be found in all continents with different names over various languages. Several studies on allspice have resulted in many and novel aromatic compounds. The name Allspice comes from its aroma, which smells like a combination of spices, especially cloves, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg. The evergreen tree that produces the allspice berries is indigenous to the rainforests of South and Central America where it grows wild. Studies reported that compounds such as Eugenol and Gallic acid had been isolated from allspice. It has anti-proliferative and antitumor properties on human cancer cells. The compound from the aqueous extract of allspice, Ericifolin shows anti-breast cancer, and anti-prostate cancer properties both are verified *in vitro* as well as *in vivo* conditions.

It is an evergreen tree; tiny whitish flowers grow on the allspice tree in the summer which produces berries. The berries dry under the sun. Dried berries look like large peppercorns.

Other than medicinal uses the allspice can also be used in cuisines and pastries. It is extensively used in Jamaican jerk seasoning, pickling, and in mole sauces. Berries are also soaked in rum to make a special liquor. They are also used in baking desserts other dishes like stews, sauces and also used in pickled vegetables for increasing the flavour.

The essential oil or scented oil from allspice has been used in candle making, perfumery and other cosmetic manufacturing. It is used as food fumigant to preserve freshness and sterility of meat and poultry products and is also a natural alternative for pesticides and fungicides.

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Medicinal uses of allspices are drinking hot tea with allspice for flue, dysmenorrhea (menstrual cramps), and dyspepsia (upset stomach). Crushed allspice berries are applied in bruises, sore joints and for muscle ache. Indigestion is relieved when allspice also is treated with herbal mixtures. Its use includes relieving respiratory congestion and toothache. Neuralgic pain has been treated using allspice extract. Essential oil when added to baths and massage oils, it promotes circulation to mitigate pain from muscle cramps and strain. The comforting scent is used to overcome fatigue and headache.

Eugenol is the major compound which contributes to the anti-inflammatory function, analgesic effect in neuralgia. Other potential medicinal components of *P. dioica* are polyphenols, terpenoids and lignin. These compounds are tested by phytochemical analysis, and further antibacterial tests were used to find the inhibitory or resistance to various microorganisms. These led the plant to enter into the Ayurveda system of medicine.

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