

= Cubeb =

Cubeb ( *Piper cubeba* ), or tailed pepper is a plant in genus *Piper* , cultivated for its fruit and essential oil . It is mostly grown in Java and Sumatra , hence sometimes called Java pepper . The fruits are gathered before they are ripe , and carefully dried . Commercial cubebs consist of the dried berries , similar in appearance to black pepper , but with stalks attached ? the " tails " in " tailed pepper " . The dried pericarp is wrinkled , and its color ranges from grayish @-@ brown to black . The seed is hard , white and oily . The odor of cubebs is described as agreeable and aromatic and the taste as pungent , acrid , slightly bitter and persistent . It has been described as tasting like allspice , or like a cross between allspice and black pepper .

Cubeb came to Europe via India through the trade with the Arabs . The name cubeb comes from Arabic kab?ba ( ????? ) , which is of unknown origin , by way of Old French quibibes . Cubeb is mentioned in alchemical writings by its Arabic name . In his *Theatrum Botanicum* , John Parkinson tells that the king of Portugal prohibited the sale of cubeb to promote black pepper ( *Piper nigrum* ) around 1640 . It experienced a brief resurgence in 19th @-@ century Europe for medicinal uses , but has practically vanished from the European market since . It continues to be used as a flavoring agent for gins and cigarettes in the West , and as a seasoning for food in Indonesia .

= = History = =

In the fourth century BC , Theophrastus mentioned komakon , including it with cinnamon and cassia as an ingredient in aromatic confections . Guillaume Budé and Claudius Salmasius have identified komakon with cubeb , probably due to the resemblance which the word bears to the Javanese name of cubeb , kumukus . This is seen as a curious evidence of Greek trade with Java in a time earlier than that of Theophrastus . It is unlikely Greeks acquired them from somewhere else , since Javanese growers protected their monopoly of the trade by sterilizing the berries by scalding , ensuring that the vines were unable to be cultivated elsewhere .

In the Tang Dynasty , cubeb was brought to China from Srivijaya . In India , the spice came to be called kabab chini , that is , " Chinese cubeb " , possibly because the Chinese had a hand in its trade , but more likely because it was an important item in the trade with China . In China this pepper was called both vilenga , and vidanga , the cognate Sanskrit word . Li Hsun thought it grew on the same tree as black pepper . Tang physicians administered it to restore appetite , cure " demon vapors " , darken the hair , and perfume the body . However , there is no evidence showing that cubeb was used as a condiment in China .

The Book of One Thousand and One Nights , compiled in the 9th century , mentions cubeb as a remedy for infertility , showing it was already used by Arabs for medicinal purposes . Cubeb was introduced to Arabic cuisine around the 10th century . The Travels of Marco Polo , written in late 13th century , describes Java as a producer of cubeb , along with other valuable spices . In the 14th century , cubeb was imported into Europe from the Grain Coast , under the name of pepper , by merchants of Rouen and Lippe . A 14th @-@ century morality tale exemplifying gluttony by the Franciscan writer Francesc Eiximenis describes the eating habits of a worldly cleric who consumes a bizarre concoction of egg yolks with cinnamon and cubeb after his baths , probably as an aphrodisiac .

Cubeb was thought by the people of Europe to be repulsive to demons , just as it was by the people of China . Ludovico Maria Sinistrari , a Catholic priest who wrote about methods of exorcism in the late 17th century , includes cubeb as an ingredient in an incense to ward off incubus . Even today , his formula for the incense is quoted by neopagan authors , some of whom also claim that cubeb can be used in love sachets and spells .

After the prohibition of sale , culinary use of cubeb decreased dramatically in Europe , and only its medicinal application continued to the 19th century . In the early 20th century , cubeb was regularly shipped from Indonesia to Europe and the United States . The trade gradually diminished to an average of 135 t ( 133 long tons ; 149 short tons ) annually , and practically ceased after 1940 .

= = Chemistry = =

The dried cubeb berries contain essential oil consisting monoterpenes ( sabinene 50 % , ? @-@ thujene , and carene ) and sesquiterpenes ( caryophyllene , copaene , ?- and ? @-@ cubebene , ? @-@ cadinene , germacrene ) , the oxides 1,4- and 1 @,@ 8 @-@ cineole and the alcohol cubebol .

About 15 % of a volatile oil is obtained by distilling cubebs with water . Cubebene , the liquid portion , has the formula  $C_{15}H_{24}$  . It is a pale green or blue @-@ yellow viscous liquid with a warm woody , slightly camphoraceous odor . After rectification with water , or on keeping , this deposits rhombic crystals of camphor of cubebs .

Cubebin (  $C_{20}H_{20}O_6$  ) is a crystalline substance existing in cubebs , discovered by Eugène Soubeiran and Capitaine in 1839 . It may be prepared from cubebene , or from the pulp left after the distillation of the oil . The drug , along with gum , fatty oils , and malates of magnesium and calcium , contains also about 1 % of cubebic acid , and about 6 % of a resin . The dose of the fruit is 30 to 60 grains , and the British Pharmacopoeia contains a tincture with a dose of 4 to 1 dram .

= = Uses = =

= = = Medicinal = = =

In India , the ancient texts of Ayurveda ( Sanskrit ???? ? ??? ) include cubeb in various remedies . Charaka and Sushruta prescribe a cubeb paste as a mouthwash , and the use of dried cubebs internally for oral and dental diseases , loss of voice , halitosis , fevers , and cough . Unani physicians use a paste of the cubeb berries externally on male and female genitals to intensify sexual pleasure during coitus . Due to this attributed property , cubeb was called " Habb @-@ ul @-@ Uruus " .

In traditional Chinese medicine cubeb is used for its alleged warming property . In Tibetan medicine , cubeb ( ka ko la in Tibetan ) is one of bzang po drug , six fine herbs beneficial to specific organs in the body , with cubeb assigned to the spleen .

Arab physicians of the Middle Ages were usually versed in alchemy , and cubeb was used , under the name kababa , when preparing the water of al butm . The Book of One Thousand and One Nights mentions cubeb as a main ingredient in making an aphrodisiac remedy for infertility :

The mixture , called " seed @-@ thickener " , is given to Shams @-@ al @-@ Din , a wealthy merchant who had no child , with the instruction that he must eat the paste two hours before having intercourse with his wife . According to the story , the merchant did get the child he desired after following these instructions . Other Arab authors wrote that cubeb rendered the breath fragrant , cured affections of the bladder , and that eating it " enhances the delight of coitus " .

In 1654 , Nicholas Culpeper wrote in the London Dispensatorie that cubebs were " hot and dry in the third degree ... ( snip ) they cleanse the head of flegm and strengthen the brain , they heat the stomach and provoke lust " . A later edition in 1826 informed the reader that " the Arabs call them Quabebe , and Quabebe Chine : they grow plentifully in Java , they stir up venery . ( snip ) ... and are very profitable for cold griefs of the womb " .

The modern use of cubeb in England as a drug dates from 1815 . There were various preparations , including oleum cubebae ( oil of cubeb ) , tinctures , fluid extracts , oleo @-@ resin compounds , and vapors , which were used for throat complaints . A small percentage of cubeb was commonly included in lozenges designed to alleviate bronchitis , in which the antiseptic and expectoral properties of the drug are useful . The most important therapeutic application of this drug , however , was in treating gonorrhea , where its antiseptic action was of much value . William Wyatt Squire wrote in 1908 that cubebs " act specifically on the genito @-@ urinary mucous membrane . ( They are ) given in all stages of gonorrhea " . As compared with copaiba in this connection cubeb has the advantages of being less disagreeable to take and somewhat less likely to disturb the digestive apparatus in prolonged administration .

The volatile oil , oleum cubebae , was the form in which cubeb is most commonly used as a drug , the dose being 5 to 20 minims , which may be suspended in mucilage or given after meals in a wafer . The drug exhibited the typical actions of a volatile oil , but exerted some of these to an exceptional degree . As such , it was liable to cause a cutaneous erythema in the course of its excretion by the skin , had a marked diuretic action , and was a fairly efficient disinfectant of the urinary passages . Its administration caused the appearance in the urine of a salt of cubebic acid which was precipitated by heat or nitric acid , and was therefore liable to be mistaken for albumin , when these two most common tests for the occurrence of albuminuria were applied .

The National Botanic Pharmacopoeia printed in 1921 tells that cubeb was " an excellent remedy for flour albus or whites . "

= = = Culinary = = =

In Europe , cubeb was one of the valuable spices during the Middle Ages . It was ground as a seasoning for meat or used in sauces . A medieval recipe includes cubeb in making sauce sarcenes , which consists of almond milk and several spices . As an aromatic confectionery , cubeb was often candied and eaten whole . Ocet Kubebowy , a vinegar infused with cubeb , cumin and garlic , was used for meat marinades in Poland during the 14th century . Cubeb can still be used to enhance the flavor of savory soups .

Cubeb reached Africa by way of the Arabs . In Moroccan cuisine , cubeb is used in savory dishes and in pastries like markouts , little diamonds of semolina with honey and dates . It also appears occasionally in the list of ingredients for the famed spice mixture Ras el hanout . In Indonesian cuisine , especially in Indonesian gulés ( curries ) , cubeb is frequently used .

= = = Cigarettes and spirits = = =

Cubeb was frequently used in the form of cigarettes for asthma , chronic pharyngitis and hay fever . Edgar Rice Burroughs , being fond of smoking cubeb cigarettes , humorously stated that if he had not smoked so many cubebs , there might never have been Tarzan . " Marshall 's Prepared Cubeb Cigarettes " was a popular brand , with enough sales to still be made during World War II . Occasionally , marijuana users claimed that smoking marijuana is no more harmful than smoking cubeb . In the musical The Music Man , set in rural Iowa in 1912 , the character Harold Hill alarms parents by telling this that their sons are trying out cubeb cigarettes at the notorious pool hall in the song " Trouble " .

In 2000 cubeb oil was included in the list of ingredients found in cigarettes , published by the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch of North Carolina 's Department of Health and Human Services .

Bombay Sapphire gin is flavored with botanicals including cubeb and grains of paradise . The brand was launched in 1987 , but its maker claims that it is based on a secret recipe dating to 1761 . Pertsovka , a dark brown Russian pepper vodka with a burning taste , is prepared from infusion of cubeb and capsicum peppers .

= = = Other = = =

Cubeb is sometimes used to adulterate the essential oil of Patchouli , which requires caution for Patchouli users . In turn , cubeb is adulterated by Piper baccatum ( also known as the " climbing pepper of Java " ) and Piper caninum .

Cubeb berries are used in love @-@ drawing magic spells by practitioners of hoodoo , an African @-@ American form of folk magic .

In 2000 , Shiseido , a well @-@ known Japanese cosmetics company , patented a line of anti @-@ aging products containing formulas made from several herbs , including cubeb .

In 2001 , the Swiss company Firmenich patented cubebol , a compound found in cubeb oil , as a cooling and refreshing agent . The patent describes application of cubebol as a refreshing agent in

various products , ranging from chewing gum to sorbets , drinks , toothpaste , and gelatin @-@ based confectioneries .