

Bay Leaf

Laurus nobilis, Lauraceae



Bay Leaf Benefits

Bay leaves have a long and noble history. The ancient Romans and Greeks used to make crowns out of true bay leaves (Laurus Nobilis, Lauraceae) to crown great and accomplished people. These great people usually included kings, war heroes and Olympians. The term 'baccalaureate' originates from this giving of bay leaf crowns to signify success, as does the term "poet laureate".

Cooking

Bay leaf not only has medicinal properties but is also used in cooking. The freshly dried bay leaves have a warm aroma, which is infused into cooking. The leaf is crushed before being used. The leaf is used for flavoring stews, dishes that need a long time to cook and soups. However, it is removed from the dish before serving.

The aroma of the leaves is much more noticeable than the taste. The fragrance of the dried leaf is herbal and floral.

Habitat & Types

Although a native of Asia Minor, the *Laurus nobilis* tree can be found in the Mediterranean owing to its partiality for warm climates. This is generally referred to as Mediterranean Bay Leaf. The Bay leaf tree is an evergreen tree that grows up to a height of 12m. The growth rate is very slow. A mature bay leaf is approximately 5cm wide and 10 cm in length.

There are several other trees grown around the world that are also called bay leaves, namely: Californian Bay Leaf (*Umbellularia californica*, Lauraceae), Indian Bay Leaf (*Cinnamomum tamala*, Lauraceae), Indonesian Bay Leaf (salam leaf, *Syzygium polyanthum*, Myrtaceae), West Indian Bay Leaf (*Pimenta racemosa*, Myrtaceae), Mexican Bay Leaf (*Litsea glaucescens*, Lauraceae).

Health Benefits

Medicinally, the leaves of the *Laurus nobilis* tree, also known as Sweet Laurel, have been used since the ancient times to treat problems associated with the liver, stomach and kidney. They were also used for treating bee and wasp stings. Nowadays, herbalists use bay leaves for treating various health complaints. Here are some ways in which bay leaves are used today:

Coughs & Colds

Placing a cloth soaked in water in which bay leaves have been boiled provides relief from cough, cold, bronchitis and chest infections.

Aches & Pains

Essential oil of bay leaf is massaged on sprained areas and for relieving headaches. The oil also provides relief from swellings, rheumatic and arthritic pain.

Fever

Bay leaves infusion promotes sweating, breaking fever, and flu symptoms.

Digestion

Bay leaves are used for treatment of digestive disorders. They reduce flatulence.

Diabetes

A **study** was conducted by the Department of Human Nutrition, Pakistan, to test the effect of bay leaf on type 2 diabetes. Forty people with type 2 diabetes were chosen for the study. They were divided into four groups and each group was given different quantities of bay leaf. At the end of the 30-day study, it was observed that all the subjects showed a marked increase in serum glucose. The conclusion was that using bay leaf reduces risk of cardiovascular diseases and Type 2 diabetes.

A similar **study** was conducted at the Department of Medical Technology, Zarqa Private University, Jordan. Similar to the above study, all subjects showed a remarkable decrease in levels of plasma glucose. Bad cholesterol levels also dropped. The conclusion of this study was that bay leaf not only improves insulin function but also reduces cardiovascular disease risks.

Active Ingredients

Bay leaves are leathery, short-stemmed and dry. They have a strong odor and a bitter taste. Bay leaves contain essential oils and a compound called Eucalyptol. According to a research conducted by Kansas State University, this compound is effective in eliminating bugs from the kitchen and repelling cockroaches.

There are nearly 81 compounds that represent almost 99% of bay leaf oil. It is believed that Polyphenol is an active bay leaf component. The in vitro active bay leaf component is soluble in water.

Medicinal Parts of the Tree

The leaf, both dried and fresh, and the fruit of the bay leaf tree are used for medicinal purposes and cooking. The leaves have a warm aroma and can be stored for later use.

Bay leaves yield an essential oil that is used in cooking and in treatment of various ailments. The essential oil that is obtained from the fruit is used in making soap.

How To Take

The leaf of the plant can be boiled and the water can be used for treatment of various medical problems.

The herbal tea, prepared using dried bay leaves, is also effective in treating digestive disorders.

Both the fruit and the leaf contain essential oils that are used in treating arthritis, headaches, joint pains, swelling and others.

Bay leaf capsules and tincture are also available as health supplements.

Laurel Leaf Essential Oil

Laurus nobilis

An ancient symbol of victory, Laurel Leaf promotes an environment of courage and concentration. As a natural cleanser and skin soother, Laurel Leaf essential oil helps you accomplish the little victories you strive for each day.

Usage Tips:

- Soothing to the skin, add a drop to your moisturizer in the evening.
- Place a couple drops in your morning shower to promote an aroma of confidence, clarity, and courage.
- Use for a soothing massage that is invigorating to the senses.
- Pair with Lemon essential oil; add a few drops of each to a spray bottle with water for a natural surface cleanser.

What Is Laurel Leaf Used For?

Native to the Mediterranean, laurel leaves are a symbol of victory in Greek mythology and were used as a head decoration to symbolize rank and achievement. For example, the winner of the ancient Olympic games was traditionally given a laurel wreath.

Aptly, Laurel Leaf essential oil promotes a courageous and confident environment. It supports feelings of concentration, focus, and clarity. Diffuse or simply take a few deep inhales of Laurel Leaf essential oil when you need an invigorating, uplifting aroma.

What Is Laurel Oil Good For?

In addition to these benefits, Laurel Leaf essential oil is good for cleaning. One of its main chemical constituents is eucalyptol, which is highly cleansing. It is gentle enough to be used to help cleanse the skin, yet powerful enough to be used as a refreshing surface cleanser.

Laurel Leaf oil is also soothing to the skin. Used topically with a massage, it offers a soothing and relaxing experience. Laurel Leaf essential oil also reduces the appearance of blemishes and promotes a clear looking complexion.

What Does Laurel Leaf Smell Like?

Herbal, minty, and refreshing, Laurel Leaf is included in the doTERRA Breathe® Respiratory Blend. This blend supports feelings of clear airways and easy breathing.

What Is the Difference Between Bay Leaves and Laurel Leaves?

In the culinary world, the laurel leaf is also known as the bay leaf. Bay leaves are commonly used to flavor soups and stews.