

Sweet Acacia

Acacia farnesiana



The bark is astringent and demulcent. Along with the leaves and roots it is used for medicinal purposes. Colombians bathe in the bark decoction as a treatment for typhoid. The gummy roots have been chewed as a treatment for sore throat. A decoction of the gum from the trunk has been used in the treatment of diarrhoea. An infusion of the flowers has been used as a stomachic. It is also used in the treatment of dyspepsia and neuroses. The flowers are added to ointment, which is rubbed on the forehead to treat headaches. The powdered dried leaves have been applied externally as a treatment for wounds. The green pods have been decocted and used in the treatment of dysentery and inflammations of the skin and mucous membranes. An infusion of the pod has been used in the treatment of sore throats, diarrhoea, leucorrhoea, conjunctivitis, and uterorrhagia. The juice of the bark is used in Nepal to treat swellings.

An essential oil called Cassie is distilled from the flowers. Cassie absolute is employed in preparation of violet bouquets and is extensively used in European perfumery. Cassie pomades are manufactured in Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. A deliciously scented essential oil, it has a fragrance of violets. A mature plant 10 years old can yield 9 kg of flowers each year. In a suitable climate, the trees begin to flower from their third year. The perfume is extracted from the flowers in form of concrete or pomade. Macerated flowers are placed in melted purified natural fat and allowed to stand for several hours. They are then replaced by fresh flowers and the process repeated until the fat is saturated with perfume. The fat is then melted, strained and cooled. This constitutes the pomade. Odour is that of violets but more intense. Absolute is prepared by mixing pomade with alcohol (2 - 3 kg to about 4 litres) and allowed to stand for 3 - 4 weeks at about -5°C. The alcohol is then separated and distilled over.



The extract obtained is an olive-green liquid with strong odour of cassie flowers. Mature trees can yield about 1 kilo of flowers per year. The bark and the fruit are a source of tannin and used in making dyes and inks. The seedpods contain about 23% tannin. The bark, in combination with iron ores and salts, is used as a black dyestuff. A gummy substance obtained from the young pods is used to mend pottery. A mucilage can be manufactured from the gummy sap. A gum exuding from trunk is considered to be superior to gum arabic in arts. The woody branches are used in India as tooth brushes. In suitable climates the plant is grown as a hedge. The trees have also been used for erosion control in sandy soils. Wood - heavy, hard, durable in the soil, close-grained. Used for fencing posts, agricultural implements, pegs, woodenware etc.

Propagation of Sweet Acacia: Seed - best sown as soon as it is ripe in a sunny position in a warm greenhouse. Stored seed should be scarified, pre-soaked for 12 hours in warm water and then sown in a warm greenhouse in March. The seed germinates in 3 - 4 weeks at 25C. As soon as the seedlings are large enough to handle, prick them out into individual pots and grow them on in a sunny position in the greenhouse for their first winter. Plant them out in late spring or early summer, after the last expected frosts, and consider giving them some protection from the cold for their first winter outdoors. Cuttings of half-ripe wood with a heel, July/August in individual pots in a frame. Overwinter in a greenhouse for the first winter and plant out in their permanent positions in late spring or early summer. Fair percentage.

