Myrtus Pimenta.

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Claſs Icoſandria.* *Ord.* Monogynia. *Lin. Gen. Plant.* 217.

Eſſ. Gen. Ch. *Cal.* 5-fidus, ſuperus. *Petala* 5. *Bacca.* 2. f. 3-ſperma.

Sp. Ch. M. floribus trichotomo-paniculatis foliis oblongo-lanceolatis. *Hort. Kew.*

Varietates, α foliis oblongo-lanceolatis acuminatis; acumine obtuſo.
β foliis ovalibus obtuſis. *Hort. Kew.*

* "Some of dese trees are frequently obſerved to be barren, which has introduced a notion among the people of Jamaica of their being male and female trees in general; and that ſome of the male or barren trees were neceſſary in every *walk*; which, as they are commonly many, is a vaſt detriment. It is however certain, that all thoſe I have obſerved were hermaphrodites: and I am credibly informed, that thoſe they call males, when lopped and broke like the reſt for one or two years, do bear very well: which I am the more apt to believe, as I have never obſerved a diſtinct male or female flower on any of them." Browne, l. c.

THIS

Myrrhis Hmenta.

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THIS handſome myrtle grows above thirty feet in height, and two in circumference; the branches near the top are much divided, and thickly beſet with leaves, which by their continual verdure always give the tree a beautiful appearance; the bark is very ſmooth, externally, and of a grey colour; the leaves vary in ſhape, and in ſize, but are commonly about four inches long, veined, pointed, elliptical, and of a deep ſhining green colour; the flowers are produced in bunches, or panicles, and ſtand upon ſubdividing or trichotomous ſtalks, which uſually terminate the branches; the calyx is cut into four roundiſh ſegments; the petals are alſo four, white, ſmall, reflex, oval, and placed oppoſite to each other between the ſegments of the calyx; the filaments are numerous, longer than the petals, ſpreading, of a greeniſh white colour, and riſe from the calyx and upper part of the germen; the antheræ are roundiſh, and of a pale yellow colour; the ſtyle is ſmooth, ſimple, and erect; the ſtigma is obtuſe; the germen becomes a round ſucculent berry, containing two kidney-ſhaped flattiſh ſeeds. This tree is a native of New Spain and the Weſt-India iſlands. In Jamaica it grows very plentifully, and in June, July, and Auguſt puts forth its flowers, which, with every part of the tree, breathes an aromatic fragrance.[a]

The Pimento tree was firſt introduced and cultivated in this country by Mr. Phil. Miller in 1739, and the figure we have annexed was drawn from a recent ſpecimen, obtained from the garden of his Grace the Duke of Northumberland at Sion-Houſe, where the plant is now in full bloom. Pimento, or the berries of this ſpecies of myrtle, are chiefly imported into England from Jamaica, and hence the name Jamaica Pepper. It is alſo named All-ſpice from its taſte being ſuppoſed to reſemble that of many different ſpecies mixed together.— When the berries arrive at their full growth, but before they begin to ripen,[b] they are picked from the branches, and expoſed to the ſun for

[a] "The leaves and bark are full of aromatic particles, which make them (the planters) extremely cautious of fire in all *Pimento walks*; where, if it ſhould once catch, it runs with great fury." Browne, l. c.

[b] "Such of the berries as come to full maturity do, like many other ſeeds, loſe that aromatic warmth for which they are eſteemed, and acquire a taſte perfectly like that of Juniper berries, which renders them a very agreeable food for the birds, the moſt induſtrious planters of theſe trees." Browne, l. c. "The berries when ripe are of a dark

for ſeveral days, till they are ſufficiently dried; this operation is to be conducted with great care, obſerving that on the firſt and ſecond day's expoſure they require to be turned very often, and always to be preſerved from rain and the evening dews. After this proceſs is completed, which is known by the colour and rattling of the ſeeds in the berries, they are put up in bags or hogſheads for the market. This ſpice, which was at firſt brought over for dietetic uſes, has been long employed in the ſhops as a ſuccedaneum to the more coſtly oriental aromatics; "it is moderately warm, of an agreeable flavour, ſomewhat reſembling that of a mixture of cloves, cinnamon, and nutmegs. Diſtilled with water it yields an elegant eſſential oil, ſo ponderous as to ſink in the water, in taſte moderately pungent, in ſmell and flavour approaching to oil of cloves, or rather a mixture of cloves and nutmegs. To rectified ſpirit it imparts, by maceration or digeſtion, the whole of its virtue: in diſtillation it gives over very little to this menſtruum, nearly all its active matter remaining concentrated in the inſpiſſated extract.

Pimento can ſcarcely be conſidered as a medicine: it is, however, an agreeable aromatic, and on this account is not unfrequently employed with different drugs, requiring ſuch a grateful adjunct. Both the Pharmacopœias direct an aqueous and ſpirituous diſtillation to be made from theſe berries, and the Edinburgh College order alſo the Oleum eſſentiale piperis Jamaicenſis.

dark purple colour, and full of a ſweet pulp, which the birds devour greedily, and muting the ſeeds, afterwards propagate theſe trees in all parts of the woods. It is thought that the ſeeds paſſing through them, in this manner, undergo ſome fermentation, which fits them better for vegetating than thoſe gathered immediately from the tree; and I believe this is the fact." Long's Jamaica, vol. 3. p. 703.

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