Myristica Moschata

Published by Dr. Woodville March 1. 1792.

Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf
urn:nbn:de:hbz:061:2-148073-p0412-3
DFG

diſeaſes with which humanity is afflicted;* but as the camphor it contains can avail but little, and its effects as a bitter or aromatic are ſo very inconſiderable, this root is now deemed to poſſeſs very little medicinal power, and might ſafely be expunged from the materia medica;† though it ſtill has a place in the confectio aromatica of the London pharmacopœia.

* Sect. xiv. §. 3. † Dr. Cullen ſays, "I am clear that it might ſafely be omitted in our lists of the Mat. Med." *Mat. Med. vol. ii. p.* 207.

MYRISTICA MOSCHATA. NUTMEG TREE.

SYNONYMA. Nux Moſchata. *Pharm. Lond. & Edinb. Park. Theat. p.* 1600. *Raii Hiſt. p.* 1522. Nux Moſchata, fructu rotundo. *Bauh. Pin. p.* 407. *Pluk. Almag. p.* 267. Nux Moſchata rotunda, ſive femina. *Gerard, Emac. p.* 1536. *Breyn. Prod. vol. ii. p.* 77. Nux Myriſtica. *Rumph. Amb. vol. ii. tab.* 4. Myriſtica Moſchata. *Thumb. Act. Stockholm. ann.* 1782. *p.* 46. *t.* 1. *Conf. Mémoire ſur le genre du Muſcadier Myriſtica, par Mr. De La Marck; Hiſt. de l'Acad. Royal des Scien. pour l'an.* 1788. *pub. en* 1790. *p.* 148.

Claſs Dioecia. *Ord.* Syngeneſia. *Shreb. Gen. Plant.* 1562.

Eſſ. Gen. Ch. *Masc. Cal.* 3-fidus. *Cor.* 0. *Anthera* circum ſupremam partem filamenti adnatæ.

Fem. Cal. 3-fidus. *Cor.* 0. *Styl.* breviſs. *Stigma* bifida. *Caps.* drupacea. *Shreb.*

Sp. Ch. M. foliis lanceolatis fructu glabro. *Thunb.*

THIS tree attains the height of thirty feet, producing numerous branches which riſe together in ſtories, and covered with bark, which of the trunk is a reddiſh brown, but that of the young branches is of a bright green colour: the leaves are nearly elliptical, pointed, undulated, obliquely nerved, on the upper ſide of a bright green, on the under whitiſh, and ſtand alternately upon footſtalks: the flowers are ſmall, and hang upon ſlender peduncles, proceeding from the axillæ of the leaves: they are both male and female upon ſeparate trees.

Universitäts- und
Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf
urn:nbn:de:hbz:061:2-148073-p0414-4
DFG

diſeaſes with which humanity is afflicted;[e] but as the camphor it contains can avail but little, and its effects as a bitter or aromatic are ſo very inconſiderable, this root is now deemed to poſſeſs very little medicinal power, and might ſafely be expunged from the materia medica;[f] though it ſtill has a place in the confectio aromatica of the London pharmacopœia.

[e] Sect. xiv. §. 3. [f] Dr. Cullen ſays, "I am clear that it might ſafely be omitted in our liſts of the Mat. Med." *Mat. Med. vol. ii. p.* 207.

MYRISTICA MOSCHATA. NUTMEG TREE.

SYNONYMA. Nux Moſchata. *Pharm. Lond. & Edinb. Park. Theat. p.* 1600. *Raii Hiſt. p.* 1522. Nux Moſchata, fructu rotundo. *Bauh. Pin. p.* 407. *Pluk. Almag. p.* 267. Nux Moſchata rotunda, ſive femina. *Gerard, Emac. p.* 1536. *Breyn. Prod. vol. ii. p.* 77. Nux Myriſtica. *Rumph. Amb. vol. ii. tab.* 4. Myriſtica Moſchata. *Thumb. Act. Stockholm. ann.* 1782. *p.* 46. *t.* 1. *Conf. Mémoire ſur le genre du Muſcadier Myriſtica, par Mr. De La Marck; Hiſt. de l'Acad. Royal des Scien. pour l'an.* 1788. *pub. en* 1790. *p.* 148.

Claſs Dioecia. *Ord.* Syngeneſia. *Shreb. Gen. Plant.* 1562.

Eſſ. Gen. Ch. *Masc. Cal.* 3-fidus. *Cor.* o. *Antheræ* circum ſupremam partem filamenti adnatæ.

Fem. Cal. 3-fidus. *Cor.* o. *Styl.* breviſs. *Stigma* bifida. *Caps.* drupacea. *Shreb.*

Sp. Ch. M. foliis lanceolatis fructu glabro. *Thunb.*

THIS tree attains the height of thirty feet, producing numerous branches which riſe together in ſtories, and covered with bark, which of the trunk is a reddiſh brown, but that of the young branches is of a bright green colour: the leaves are nearly elliptical, pointed, undulated, obliquely nerved, on the upper ſide of a bright green, on the under whitiſh, and ſtand alternately upon footſtalks: the flowers are ſmall, and hang upon ſlender peduncles, proceeding from the axillæ of the leaves: they are both male and female upon ſeparate trees.

Of the *male flower* the calyx consists of one bell-shaped leaf, divided at the brim into three small teeth: there is no corolla: the stamina, according to De La Marck, are from six to twelve, joined in a bundle, consisting of short filaments, inserted into the receptacle, and surrounded with antheræ, which are long, linear, and united.

Of the *female flower* the calyx is similar to that of the male flower: there is no corolla: the germen is above, oval, and supports a style, terminated by two stigmata: the fruit is round or oval, and of the drupous kind, of which the external covering is fleshy, tough, and by opening at the top separates into two valves, and discovers the Mace, which has a reticulated appearance, and divides into three portions, which closely invest a slender shell containing the seed or Nutmeg. This tree is a native of the East Indies, particularly the Molucca Islands.

The Nutmeg has been supposed to be the Comacum of Theophrastus, but there seems little foundation for this opinion, nor can it with more probability be thought to be the Chrysobalanos of Galen. Our first knowledge of it was evidently derived from the Arabians; by Avicenna it was called Jiausiban, or Jausiband,[a] which signifies Nut of Banda. Rumphius both figured and described this tree;[b] but the figure given by him is so imperfect, and the description so confused, that Linnæus, who gave it the generic name Myristica, was unable to assign its proper characters. Sonnerat's account of the Muscadier is still more erroneous;[c] and the younger Linnæus was unfortunately misled by this author, placing the Myristica in the class Polyandria, and describing the corolla as consisting of five petals.[d] Thunberg, who examined the flower of the Nutmeg, places it in the class monoecia, and according to his description, the male flower has but one filament, surrounded at the upper part by the antheræ;[e] and as the filaments are short and slender, and the antheræ united, this mistake might easily arise.*

[a] *Lib. ii. cap.* 503, and by Serapion it was named Jeuzbave.
[b] Vide, *l. c.* [c] *Voyage à la Nouvelle Guinée, p.* 194. *t.* 116. [d] *Suppl. Plant. p.* 265. [e] *Act. Stockholm.* 1782. *p.* 46.

* Since writing the above, Mr. Dryander informed me, that he had examined several specimens of these male flowers preserved in spirit, in each of which he found only one columnar filament, and concludes that De La Marck must have been deceived by dividing the fibres of this organ: consequently the myristica should in strictness be placed in the order monadelphia.

Mr.

Mr. De La Marck informs us, that he received ſeveral branches of the Myriſtica, both in flower and fruit, from the Iſle of France, where a Nutmeg-tree, which was introduced by Monſ. Poivre, in 1770, is now very large, and continually producing flowers and fruit.[f] From theſe branches, which were ſent from Monſ. Céré, Director of the King's garden in that iſland, Monſ. De La Marck has been enabled to deſcribe and figure this and other ſpecies of the Myriſtica with great accuracy; and the annexed plate will ſhew, that we have profited by his labours.

The ſeeds or kernels, called Nutmegs, are well known, as they have been long uſed both for culinary and medical purpoſes. Diſtilled with water, they yield a large quantity of eſſential oil, reſembling in flavour the ſpice itſelf; after the diſtillation, an inſipid ſebacious matter is found ſwimming on the water; the decoction, inſpiſſated, gives an extract of an unctious, very lightly bitteriſh taſte, and with little or no aſtringency. Rectified ſpirit extracts the whole virtue of Nutmegs by infuſion, and elevates very little of it in diſtillation: hence the ſpirituous extract poſſeſſes the flavour of the ſpice in an eminent degree.

Nutmegs, when heated, yield to the preſs a conſiderable quantity of limpid yellow oil, which on cooling concretes into a ſebacious conſiſtence. In the ſhops we meet with three ſorts of unctious ſubſtances, called Oil of Mace, though really expreſſed from the Nutmeg. The beſt is brought from the Eaſt Indies in ſtone jars; this is of a thick conſiſtence, of the colour of mace, and has an agreeable fragrant ſmell: the ſecond ſort, which is paler coloured, and much inferior in quality, comes from Holland in ſolid maſſes, generally flat, and of a ſquare figure: the third, which is the worſt of all, and uſually called Common Oil of Mace, is an artificial compoſition of ſevum, palm oil, and the like, flavoured with a little genuine oil of Nutmeg.[g]

The medicinal qualities of Nutmeg are ſuppoſed to be aromatic, anodyne, ſtomachic, and reſtringent,[h] and with a view to the laſt mentioned effects, it has been much uſed in diarrhœas, and dyſenteries. To many people the aromatic flavour of Nutmeg is very agreeable; they, however, ſhould be cautioned not to uſe it in large quantities, as it is apt to affect the head, and even to manifeſt an

[f] *L. c.* [g] *Ed. New Diſpenſ.* by *Dr. Duncan. p.* 238. [h] *Bergius, M. M. p.* 884.

hypnotic

hypnotic power in ſuch a degree as to prove extremely dangerous. Bontius ſpeaks of this as a frequent occurrence in India;[i] and Dr. Cullen relates a remarkable inſtance of this ſoporific effect of the Nutmeg, which fell under his own obſervation,[k] and hence concludes, that in apoplectic and paralytic caſes this ſpice may be very improper. The officinal preparations of Nutmeg are a ſpirit and eſſential oil, and the Nutmeg in ſubſtance roaſted, to render it more aſtringent. Both the ſpice itſelf and its eſſential oil, enter ſeveral compoſitions, as the confectio aromatica, ſpiritus amoniæ com. &c. MACE poſſeſſes qualities ſimilar to thoſe of the Nutmeg, but is leſs aſtringent, and its oil is ſuppoſed to be more volatile and acrid.

[i] *De Medicina Indorum, p.* 20. See alſo *Miſcell. Nat. Cur. dec.* III. *ann.* II. *obſ.* 120.

[k] "A perſon by miſtake took two drams or a little more of powdered Nutmeg: he felt it warm in his ſtomach, without any uneaſineſs; but in about an hour after he had taken it he was ſeized with a drowſineſs, which gradually increaſed to a complete ſtupor and inſenſibility; and not long after he was found fallen from his chair, lying on the floor of his chamber in the ſtate mentioned. Being laid a-bed he fell aſleep; but waking a little from time to time, he was quite delirious: and he thus continued alternately ſleeping and delirious for ſeveral hours. By degrees, however, both theſe ſymptoms diminiſhed, ſo that in about ſix hours from the time of taking the Nutmeg he was pretty well recovered from both. Although he ſtill complained of head-ach, and ſome drowſineſs, he ſlept naturally and quietly the following night, and next day was quite in his ordinary health." *Mat. Med. vol. ii. p.* 204.

CARYOPHYLLUS AROMATICUS. CLOVE TREE.

SYNONYMA. Caryophyllum aromaticum. *Pharm. Lond. & Edinb.* Caryophyllus aromaticus, fructu oblongo. *Bauh. Pin. p.* 410. *Raii Hiſt. p.* 1508. Caryophylli. *Park. Theat. p.* 1577. *Gerard, Emac. p.* 1535. Caryophyllus aromaticus, Indiæ orientalis, fructu clavato monopyreno. *Pluk. Alm.* 88. *t.* 155. *f.* 1. Caryophyllum. *Rumph. Herb. Amb. vol. ii. t.* 1. 2. *ſq.* Caryophyllus Kruidnagelboom. *Houttuyn natuurlyke hiſtorie, vol. ii. P.* 3. *p.* 44. *tab.* 12. *fig.* 1. Le Geroflier. *Sonnerat Voyage à la Nouvelle Guinée. p.* 196. *tab.* 119.

Claſs Polyandria.

Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf urn:nbn:de:hbz:061:2-148073-p0418-7 DFG