

Anacardium occidentale



Common Names

Hindi: Kaju

Marathi: Kaju

Tamil: Mundhiri

Telugu: Jeedi Pappu

Kannada: Godambi

Malayalam: Kasuvandi

Bengali: Kaju

Gujarati: Kaju

Kingdom: Plantae

Clade: Angiosperms

Order: Sapindales

Family: Anacardiaceae

Genus: *Anacardium*

Species: *A. occidentale*

Characteristic Features

Tree: A small to medium sized evergreen tree that can grow up to 14 meters (46 feet) tall.

Leaves: Simple, alternate, leathery, and oval shaped with smooth margins.

Flowers: Small, greenish yellow to reddish, arranged in a panicle, and have a sweet fragrance.

Fruit: The true fruit is the kidney shaped cashew nut, which develops at the end of a fleshy, swollen stem called the cashew apple. The cashew apple is an accessory fruit, typically yellow, red, or orange.

Nut: The cashew nut is encased in a hard shell containing caustic oil that must be carefully removed during processing.

Culinary Uses

1. **Nuts:** The edible cashew nut is consumed raw, roasted, or cooked. It is used in various cuisines and snacks.

2. **Cashew Butter:** Made from ground cashew nuts and used as a spread or in cooking.

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3. Cashew Milk: A non-dairy milk alternative made from cashew nuts.
 4. Cashew Apple: The cashew apple is used to make juices, jams, and alcoholic beverages like cashew feni in Goa, India.

Traditional Medicine

1. Anti-bacterial: The leaves, bark, and nuts have been used in traditional medicine for their antibacterial properties.
2. Anti-inflammatory: Cashew extracts are used to reduce inflammation and treat skin conditions.

Industrial Uses

1. Cashew Nut Shell Liquid (CNSL): Extracted from the shell and used in the production of lubricants, waterproofing, paints, and varnishes.
2. Wood: The wood of the cashew tree is used for furniture and boat building due to its durability.

Other Uses

1. Ornamental: The cashew tree is also grown for ornamental purposes in gardens and parks.
2. Soil Improvement: Cashew trees can improve soil fertility and prevent erosion in agroforestry systems.

Nutritional and Health Benefits

1. Heart Health: Rich in healthy fats, particularly monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, which are beneficial for heart health.
 2. Weight Management: High in protein and dietary fibre, which promote satiety and help in weight management.
 3. Bone Health: Provides essential minerals like magnesium, phosphorus, and calcium, contributing to strong bones.
 4. Antioxidant Properties: Contains antioxidants such as vitamin E and selenium, which protect cells from oxidative damage.
 5. Immune Support: High in zinc and other nutrients that support immune function.
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