



## Medicinal Plant Information

Beside each plant at Dilston Physic Garden visitors can find out more – traditional use in plant medicine, biological actions tested in lab studies (*in vitro* – in test tubes, *in vivo* in animal models), any clinical (human) trial information, the isolated active chemicals and the folklore that brings the plant to life.

## Medicinal Trees growing at Dilston Physic Garden, A-Z

### 1. Alder *Alnus* species

Enteritis, fever, colds and rheumatism. Gargle for tonsillitis. Crushed leaves for chapped skin. Anti-flu flavonoids isolated.

Regarded as the 'faerie tree' able to grant access to so called fairy realms.

### 2. Aspen *Populus tremula*

For chronic prostate and bladder disorders. Nervine and stimulant.

Anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic and analgesic.

Called the "storyteller's tree" by the gypsies, the aspen gives the power of vibrant speech and a lilting voice.

### 3. Chaste Tree *Vitex agnus-castus*

Used to treat premenstrual symptoms. Controlled clinical studies of chaste extracts show beneficial effects in premenstrual breast pain (mastalgia) and in other premenstrual symptoms in clinical studies. Reduces serum prolactin levels. Dopaminergic effects. Clerodene diterpenes such as clerodadieneol in part responsible. Contains estrogens.

### 4. Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*

Sedative, narcotic.

Delightfully scented flowers but TOXIC.

### 5. Wild Cherry *Prunus serotina*

Treats nervous cough, laryngitis and bronchitis, and diarrhoea. Sedative and analgesic.

Chemical anthocyanins reduce pain and inflammation *in vivo*. Anxiolytic *in vivo*. Related tart cherry species induce sleep in human studies.

Reputed in gypsy magic to induce lust. Fastest growing hardwood.

### 6. Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris*

Laxative, counters liver disorders. Dentifrice.

Flowers help pollinate cultivated apple trees.

Used in Bach flower remedies for restlessness and 'perfection' seekers.

### 7. Cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos*

Urinary tract infections, kidney stones, increases acidity of urine, wound dressing.

### 8. Cypress *Cypressus* species

Essential oil for PMT, painful periods, nervous tension and menopause. Tonic for nervous system.

In folklore trees planted in graveyards as the scent said to comfort the bereaved.

CAUTION Pollen causes allergies.

### 9. Dogwood *Cornus* species

Tonic, lowers blood pressure.

Reverses cardiac hypertrophy in lab models. Controls bacterial infections. Neuroprotective in stroke models. Anti-diabetic effects *in vitro*.

Legend - crucifixion cross made of large dogwood tree so was then turned into a small bush.

### 10. Elder *Sambucus niger*

For colds, flu, hay fever, sinusitis and fevers. Anti-rheumatic. Anti-convulsant.

Berry clinically proven as efficient, safe and cost-effective treatment for influenza. Possible narcotic effects - advice not to sleep under the tree.

In folklore protective effects include keeping away evil and negative influences.

### 11. Ginkgo *Ginkgo biloba*

Used in Traditional Chinese Medicine for asthma, coughs and digestive problems.

Anti-ageing, pro-vitality -increases blood flow to brain, improves memory. Clinically verified (most trials) for improving memory in normal people, these with mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's Disease. Contains ginkgolides and bilobalides. Not yet verified for tinnitus.

One of the oldest tree species dating back 250 million years, the only plant to survive the bomb on Hiroshima.

### 12. Hawthorn *Crataegus oxyacanthoides* or *monogyna*

Used for heart disease and arrhythmias, diuretic, for sore throats.

Improves cardiac function, is hypotensive and blood lipid lowering (clinically verified). Improves cognitive function and attention. Cardio-protective in lab models of myocardial infarction. Haws rich in vitamin C and flavonoids such as quercetin.

Inhabited by fairies according to many folklore stories; associated with marriage and fertility.

### 13. Holm or Holly Oak *Quercus ilex*

Used to treat wounds. Galls (source gallic and tannic acids) used for tonsil infections.

Contains compounds with antibacterial, anticandidal and gastroprotective properties *in vitro*.

Celts, Greeks and Romans considered this a sacred tree providing knowledge of the divine. Holm is an ancient name for holly.

One of top 3 trees used for truffle orchards. Acorns edible.

14. Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*

Haemostatic, used externally to heal wounds. Relieves exhaustion.

*In vitro* anti cancer activity.

Romans used wood to make chariots because of strength. Magical tree used to make wands.

15. Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*

Bark - tonic, narcotic. Fruit - for neuralgia, rheumatism and venous tonic.

Clinically verified for venous insufficiency. Contracts blood vessels. Anti-ageing effects on skin fibroblasts *in vitro*.

Deceptive name, neither a chestnut nor safe for horses. Carrying the seed (buckeye) said to bring good luck. Spectacular spring flowers and famous for conkers.

16. Lime/Linden Tree *Tilia europaea*

Traditional use treats hysteria, spasms, and palpitations.

For migraine and some auto-immune disorders. Can lower blood pressure.

17. Mulberry *Morus nigra*

Traditional use: diuretic, hypotensive, laxative, febrifuge.

Pain relief: morusin, chemical in bark, is analgesic *in vivo*.

Leaves anti-inflammatory due to chemicals such as betulinic acid. Fruit protects dopaminergic neurons in model of Parkinson's disease.

18. Myrtle *Myrtus communis*

Essential oil: aphrodisiac, nerve tonic and anti-hyperglycaemic.

Antiseptic. Anti-bacterial (many bacteria e.g. salmonella, helicobacter). Treats parasites. Kills mosquito larvae. Berries protect against ulcers *in vivo*.

Ancient Greeks associated tree with Aphrodite, goddess of love. Traditional wedding bouquet plant (Q. Victoria). Tea said to preserve youth.

19. Pine *Pinus sylvestris*

Treats fatigue, nervous exhaustion, sleeplessness. Needles and oil are expectorant, antiseptic, antiviral and immunostimulant; used in pulmonary and respiratory disorders.

Essential oil is cleansing, mentally stimulating and soothing. Needles or chemicals from some pines improve memory in lab models; *P. radiata* improves memory in clinical trials.

Symbol of royalty and immortality in folklore. National tree of Scotland.

20. Purple Smoke Tree *Cotinus coggygria*

Wood is used as a febrifuge and for eye ailments. Infusions have been used as a gargle and to stop bleeding.

Hepatoprotective, anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant effects *in vitro*.

Named after appearance of its flowers.

### 21. Rowan/Mountain Ash *Sorbus aucuparia*

Anti-scorbutic, relieves rheumatic and menstrual pain.

Berries – mild laxative, stimulate menstruation, treat sore throats, scurvy and rheumatism.

Renowned in Celtic tradition as a magical tree e.g. planted near houses as a protector – known as the wigger tree on account of ‘anti-witching’ devices

### 22. Staghorn *Rhus typhina*

High in vitamin C, good for immunity.

Contains antioxidants for cell protection. Contains gallic acids, potent antimicrobial compounds. Blood sugar-regulating activity for diabetics. Lowers ‘bad’ cholesterol, while boosting good cholesterol. Regulates the gut and remedies diarrhoea. Antimicrobial and cell protective properties *in vitro*.

Glowing red berries make a delicious ‘sumacade’ drink.

### 23. Willow *Salix* species

High in constituents useful for pain and inflammation.

Bark contains salicin, and other salicylates, tannins and flavonoids. The constituents offer anti-inflammatory effects long recognized, and the mechanisms of action are now understood due to research studies.

Fresh or dried bark can be chewed or made into teas.

### 24. Yew *Taxus* species

Fruit: menstrual stimulant, abortifacient, diuretic and laxative.

Medieval physician (Avicenna) used *T. baccata* as a cardiac remedy. Ancient and sacred reputation for immortality, renewal, regeneration.

Taxol occurs in other trees – it’s a result of fungal growth. Paclitaxel (Taxol®) isolated from bark of Pacific yew (*T. brevifolia*) proven to control ovarian and breast cancer. Docetaxel most active single agent in treatment of advanced metastatic breast cancer. Red berry seeds are TOXIC.

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## Visiting Dilston Physic Garden

For visiting Dilston Physic Garden, Corbridge, Northumberland NE45 5QZ, see the website

<https://dilstonphysicgarden.com/>

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