

Uses and symbolism

Bay Laurel is the source of the bay leaves which are used for their flavour in cooking. It was also the source of the laurel wreath of ancient Greece, and therefore the expression of "resting on one's laurels". A wreath of bay laurels was given as the prize at the Pythian Games because the games were in honor of Apollo and the laurel was one of his symbols ever since his unsuccessful pursuit of Daphne. In the Bible, the sweet-bay is often an emblem of prosperity and fame. In Christianity it is said to symbolize the Resurrection of Christ and the triumph of Humanity thereby. It is also the source of the word *baccalaureate* (laurel berry), and of *poet laureate*.

It is also widely cultivated as an ornamental plant in regions with mediterranean or oceanic climates, and as an indoor plant in colder regions.

Laurel as a spice

In the past, laurel leaves were more often used as a spice than these days. The aroma of laurel suits to almost every dish, and beside aroma, it has a purpose to improve digestion, but be careful when adding a laurel leaves into the dish, because if you put too much, the dish may become bitter. Some people are allergic on laurel leaves or berries, also on laurel oil.

Laurel oil

It is used only on the skin and is very suitable for massages. It softens hypodermic blisters and bumps, helps with various shingles, muscle pains, joint twists and rheumatism

Tea for treating flu and bronchitis

Three fresh, chopped laurel leaves boil for 10 minutes in 2.5 dcl water. Leave it to rest, covered, for 10 minutes. Filtrate, add one table-spoon of lemon juice and 2 tbls of honey. Drink 2-3 times daily for about 2,5 dcl of this tea.

Laurel leaf tincture

Chop well 30 g of fresh laurel leaves, put in the bottle (with wider throat) and pour over 3 dcl of brandy (at least 60 % alcohol). Keep it well plugged for 10 days on warm spot, then filtrate it.

This tincture is excellent treatment for extended tendons, muscle pains, extended muscles, rheumatism, joint twists and paralysed limbs.

Laurel dubbing for treating rheumatism (old Mediterranean recipe)

Mash well 20 g of fresh, mature laurel berries (in wooden or porcelain mortar) and boil them for 15 minutes in 1 liter of boiling water. Juice obtained filtrate with cotton cloth and leave it to cool. Collect oil from the surface and mix it with one tea-spoon of non-salted lard. Mix it well and store it in glass or plastic bowl. This dubbing is excellent treatment for rheumatism and painful muscles and joints.