

Did You Know?



Juniper, *Juniperus communis*

- The blue cones of the common juniper, which resemble small blueberries, are used to flavor gin and other spirits, game, beef and even tea.
- The culinary use of juniper berries as a flavoring is most common in Northern Europe, especially in Germany, Scandinavia, and the Alsace region of France.
- The flavor and aroma of juniper berries is described as pine-like, resinous, fresh and pungent.
- The name gin comes from the French and Dutch words for juniper.
- Juniper berries, as they are commonly known, have been used medicinally for centuries. The first recorded use dating back to 1500 B.C. E. in ancient Egypt, as a remedy for tapeworms.
- Other medicinal uses have ranged from digestive and liver problems, urinary infections, arthritic and rheumatic conditions, colds and flu. Topical applications have been used to treat skin conditions such as eczema, and psoriasis.
- In addition to medicinal uses, Native Americans used juniper to make incense, welcome guests and cleanse homes.
- Western European folklore says that when juniper is planted by the front door to your home, a witch cannot enter.
- By Scottish legend, juniper incense is used to ward off the evil eye and by Tibetans to remove demons.
- The Greeks, who believe juniper increased physical stamina, gave it to the original Olympians.
- There are many species of juniper, some are not edible, others are toxic and still others have not been studied for potential toxicity.

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