

More Than Just A Plant

Ethnobotany

Plants (including trees and shrubs) are more than just plants.

Their flowers, leaves, branches and trunks provide food, fibre, tools and medicine. The study of plants that have other uses, often developed by different cultures, is called ethnobotany. Some examples of ethnobotanical plants in these gardens are:



New Zealand Flax (*Phormium tenax*)

The long strappy red and green leaves of this plant are used by penguins in New Zealand's South Island to cover their nesting sites. The leaves can also be used to make baskets, rope and fishing nets.



Peppercorn Tree (*Schinus molle var areira*)

Wood from this tree is good for making saddles. These trees are often found in or near farm sheep yards in Australia. It also produces tiny pink peppercorns.



Bunya-Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwilli*)

Nuts produced by this tree can be as large as coconuts and contain seeds that are traditionally roasted and eaten by Indigenous Australian. The tree grows to 30 metres.



Susuki Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*)

Susuki grass stems make great material for thatching rooves. It is popular for thatching the rooves of houses and temples in Japan.

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Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*)

This tree, found along creeks and rivers in south-east Australia, has long willowy branches. Its bark yields a source of pain-killer that chemists have copied to include in aspirin.



Medlar (*Mespilus germanica*)

The Medlar tree produces a fruit that's rarely grown today and is best eaten when it's over-ripe and fermenting (almost going rotten).



Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*)

The pods of the Carob tree are ground to make a powder often used instead of chocolate in cooking.



Yew Tree (*Taxus baccata*)

Yew wood is so soft and bendy it was used by knights in medieval times to make bows for firing arrows.



Deodar Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*)

The bark and foliage of this tall tree is very fragrant. Its wood and bark produce an essential oil that is popular today.