

## Uses of cashew

The cashew tree has been cultivated for food and medicine for 400 years. Cashews have served nutritional, medicinal and wartime needs. More recently, they have been used in the manufacture of adhesives, resins and natural insecticides. During World War II, the cashew tree became highly prized as the source of valuable oil drawn from the shell.

The cashew kernel is a rich source of fat (46 percent) and protein (18 percent) and is a good source of calcium, phosphorus and iron. It has a high percentage of polyunsaturated fatty acids, in particular, the essential fatty acid linoleic acid. The tart apple is a source of vitamin C, calcium and iron. The bark, leaves, gum and shell are all used in medicinal applications. The leaves and bark are commonly used to relieve toothache and sore gums and the boiled water extract of the leaf or bark is used as a mouthwash. A paste of bark ground in water is used in topical applications for the cure of Ring worm; in this form it can however act as an irritant and should not be applied to sensitive skin or to children. The root has been used as a purgative. Fibres from the leaves can be used to strengthen fishing lines and nets and as folk remedies for calcium deficiency and intestinal colic, as well as a vitamin supplement. The water-resistant wood is used for boats and ferries, while the resin, in addition to having industrial uses, is used as an expectorant, cough remedy and insect repellent.

