

Moringa - A Miracle Tree for Africa



The moringa tree is known for its extraordinary properties. Because it thrives with little water, it would also be very useful for Africa, the continent, which is most affected by climate change.

ORIGIN

The moringa tree, also known as the drumstick tree, originates from the area at the foot of the Himalayas and is mentioned in 5000-year-old writings. It is widespread in Asia and the Middle East and was brought from there to East Africa. Of the 13 species, moringa oleifera is particularly interesting.

Its deep roots make it possible to survive in dry areas with an annual rainfall of 500 mm or more per square meter and could therefore play a role in the fight against desertification. The tree can grow up to six meters high in its first year, flowers after just three months and bears fruit in its first year, even in dry periods. As the crown allows sunlight to pass through, the tree is also suitable for mixed cultivation. When it is felled, new branches grow from the tree stump.

MULTIPLE USES

Almost all parts of this extraordinary tree are useful.

- The **roots** contain mustard oil compounds and taste like horseradish. They are used as a spice and as a remedy. Once the slightly poisonous outer skin has been peeled off, the roots are edible as a vegetable.

- The **flowers**, which the tree bears for eight months, are suitable as tea, but can also be used to make perfume and remedies and can be processed into honey.

- The **leaves** can be eaten raw or as a salad or cooked into spinach. "They have the highest known density of vital substances of all foods... Gently dried leaf powder is now marketed as a concentrated superfood, as it provides all vitamins, minerals, trace elements, amino acids, plant protein, chlorophyll and accompanying plant substances in an optimal combination for humans."

- The pods are up to 45 cm long and 2-3 cm thick and contain nut-like **seeds**. Young, unripe pods are eaten as a vegetable, like young beans. Mature pods are made into soups, or peeled and prepared as a kind of asparagus.

- The 25 seeds are used as **medicine** for numerous diseases: They have an anti-inflammatory, pain-relieving and wound-healing effect and strengthen the immune system. Traditionally, moringa seeds help with diabetes and are effective against parasite infestation. As it is rich in vitamins, minerals and trace elements, it is used to treat malnutrition.

- Recent research has shown that powdered moringa fruit can also be used to **purify dirty water**. "This powder then causes dirt and eukaryotic microbes to clot together in the water and sink to the bottom. The nearly germ-free water can then be poured off and used. With just 10 milligrams of seed powder, you can purify around one liter of water." (1)

- Moringa seed husks can also be used for the production of **bio-ethanol** and is more economical than ethanol from corn or sugar beet. The trees can produce per hectare about 20,000 liters of fuel. The residues can be used as fertilizer or animal feed. Bio-diesel from moringa has a high calorific value, comparable to gasoline.

- Adding moringa to **livestock feed** also brings considerable success. Cows produce more milk and grow faster.

- As moringa stores nitrogen from the air in its roots, it is used as a **fertilizer** in agriculture and, at the same time, improve the soil and prevent erosion.

- Sprayed on other plants, a moringa extract acts as an **insecticide**, making them more resistant to insects and disease and leading to higher yields. Scientific research has shown that plants treated with moringa were healthier, grew faster and produced higher yields per hectare.

Numerous organizations promote the proliferation of the tree in various parts of Africa. It is a simple and effective form of development aid.

„The moringa tree can be considered a universal superfood due to its fascinating properties. In many ways, the moringa tree is the 'right tree in the right place'. This applies above all to its incredibly practical, immediate effects, which can significantly improve the quality of life of local people."

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Quellen: <https://bioesca.de> <https://www.phytodoc.de/>
<https://www.scienceinschool.org/article/2011/moringa/>