

## Almendro

*Prunus dulcis* (Miller)

DA Web.

Toxicidad



- **Parte Utilizada**

Las semillas. El aceite se obtiene por expresión en frío de las semillas maduras de *Prunus dulcis* (Miller) D.A. Webb var. *dulcis*, *Prunus dulcis* (Miller) D.A. Webb var. *amara* (DC.) Buchheim o de una mezcla de ambas variedades.

- **Principios Activos**

- Variedad *dulcis*: glúcidos, mucílagos, próticos (20-25%): caseína; lípidos (50%): trioleína. Complejo enzimático: emulsina, con abundante glucosidasa. Vitaminas: A, B1, B2, PP, B5, B6. Sales minerales. Fitosteroles: colesterol, campesterol, estigmasterol, beta-sitosterol, delta 5 y delta 7-avenasterol,  
- Variedad *amara*: similar a la *dulcis*. Además posee heterósidos cianogénicos: amigdalósido (al masticarlo libera ácido cianhídrico), aldehído benzoico.

- **Acción Farmacológica**

- Variedad *dulcis*: el aceite tiene propiedades laxantes. Usado tópicamente es emoliente y antiinflamatorio. Las semillas y su emulsión acuosa ("leche de almendras"), tienen un gran valor nutritivo.  
- Variedad *amara*: Por destilación se obtiene la esencia de almendras amargas, proceso en el que el amigdalósido se desdobla en aldehído benzóico que, a muy bajas dosis, es espasmolítico, antitusivo y expectorante.

- **Indicaciones**

- Aceite de almendras dulces: dermatitis, ictiosis, psoriasis, pieles secas, heridas, quemaduras superficiales, estreñimiento, para reblandecer los tapones de cerumen de los oídos. También es muy útil como vehículo para la administración de aceites esenciales a niños, ancianos y personas que no toleran las soluciones alcohólicas. Tiene un amplio uso en cosmetología.  
- Los frutos y la "leche de almendras" tienen aplicación dietética.  
- El aceite esencial de almendras amargas se usa casi exclusivamente como aromatizante. Como espasmolítico y pectoral suele preferirse el benzoato de bencilo obtenido por síntesis, para evitar los peligros derivados de la presencia de restos cianogénicos. Popularmente se emplean las diferentes partes de la almendra dulce (semilla, epicarpio, mesocarpio y

endocarpio) como anticatarral, antitusígeno, demulcente, pectoral, revulsivo, hipotensor, hepatoprotector, sudorífico y antiflogístico.

- **Contraindicaciones**

Embarazo, lactancia, niños menores de dos años (formas de dosificación basadas en las almendras amargas).

- **Precaución / Intoxicaciones**

Las almendras amargas son altamente tóxicas por el ácido cianhídrico que liberan en contacto con el agua o saliva, por acción de la emulsina (contienen un 0,25 % de su peso en CNH, alrededor de 1 mg por almendra). Unas pocas almendras amargas pueden causar la muerte en niños. En adultos, una veintena de ellas producen: náuseas, vómitos, problemas respiratorios, hipotermia y asfixia.

- **Formas Galénicas / Posología**

- Almendras dulces, leche de almendras: uso dietético.

- Aceite de almendras:

\* Uso interno: 2 a 4 cucharadas al día, como laxante.

\* Uso tópico. Para tratar la sequedad cutánea, aplicar sobre la piel húmeda.

- Agua destilada de almendras amargas (1/1000 de CNH): 20 gotas, 1-3 veces al día.

- **Bibliografía**

Referencias incluidas en la Bibliografía General.

<http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/a/almon026.html>

---SWEET ALMOND---

Family: N.O. Rosaceae

Botanical: *Amygdalus communis* (LINN.) var. *dulcis*

Medicinal Action and Uses

Constituents

There are numerous varieties of the Sweet Almond in commerce, the chief being: (1) the Jordan Almonds, the finest and best of the Sweet variety. These, notwithstanding their Oriental name (derived really from the French *jardin*), we receive from Malaga, imported without their shells. They are distinguished from all other Almonds by their large size, narrow, elongated shape and thin skin; (2) Valentia Almonds, which are broader and shorter than the Jordan variety, with a thicker dusty brown, scurfy skin, usually imported in their shell, and sometimes called in consequence, 'Shell Almonds'; (3) and (4) Sicilian and Barbary Almonds, which closely resemble the Valentia Almonds but are rather smaller and of an inferior quality. They occasionally contain an admixture of Bitter Almonds.

The annual import of Sweet Almonds into this country is normally over 500 tons.

Sweet Almonds have a bland taste, and the white emulsion formed when they are bruised with water is characterized by no marked odour, the seeds being thus distinguished from Bitter Almonds.

[Top] [Top of SWEET ALMOND]

---Medicinal Action and Uses---Fresh Sweet Almonds possess demulcent and nutrient properties, but as the outer brown skin sometimes causes irritation of the alimentary canal, they are blanched by removal of this skin when used for food. Though pleasant to the taste, their nutritive value is diminished unless well masticated, as they are difficult of digestion, and may in some cases induce nettlerash and feverishness. They have a special dietetic value, for besides containing about 20 per cent of proteids, they contain practically no starch, and are therefore often made into flour for cakes and biscuits for patients suffering from diabetes.

Sweet Almonds are used medicinally, the official preparations of the British Pharmacopoeia being *Mistura Amygdalae*, *Pulvis Amygdalae Compositus* and Almond Oil.

On expression they yield nearly half their weight in a bland fixed oil, which is employed medicinally for allaying acrid juices, softening and relaxing solids, and in bronchial diseases, in tickling coughs, hoarseness, costiveness, nephritic pains, etc.

When Almonds are pounded in water, the oil unites with the fluid, forming a milky juice - Almond Milk - a cooling, pleasant drink, which is prescribed as a diluent in acute diseases, and as a substitute for animal milk: an ounce of Almonds is sufficient for a quart of water, to which gum arabic is in most cases a useful addition. The pure oil mixed with a thick mucilage of gum arabic, forms a more permanent emulsion; one part of gum with an equal quantity of water being enough for four parts of oil. Almond emulsions possess in a certain degree the emollient qualities of the oil, and have this advantage over the pure oil, that they may be given in acute or inflammatory disorders without danger of the ill effects which the oil might sometimes produce by turning rancid. Sweet Almonds alone are employed in making emulsions, as the Bitter Almond imparts its peculiar taste when treated in this way.

Blanched and beaten into an emulsion with barley-water, Sweet Almonds are of great use in the stone, gravel, strangury and other disorders of the kidneys, bladder and biliary ducts.

By their oily character, Sweet Almonds sometimes give immediate relief in heartburn. For this, it is recommended to peel and eat six or eight Almonds.

Almonds are also useful in medicine for uniting substances with water. Castor oil is rendered palatable when rubbed up with pounded Almonds and some aromatic distilled water.

The fixed Oil of Almonds is extracted from both Bitter and Sweet Almonds. If intended for external use, it must, however, be prepared only from Sweet Almonds.

The seeds are ground in a mill after removing the reddish-brown powder adhering to them and then subjected to hydraulic pressure, the expressed oil being afterwards filtered and bleached, preferably by exposure to light.

[Top] [Top of SWEET ALMOND]

---Constituents---Almond oil is a clear, pale yellow, odourless liquid, with a bland, nutty taste. It consists chiefly of Olein, with a small proportion of the Glyceride of Linolic Acid and other Glycerides, but contains no Stearin. It is thus very similar in composition to Olive Oil (for which it may be used as a pleasant substitute), but it is devoid of Chlorophyll, and usually contains a somewhat larger proportion of Olein than Olive Oil.

It is used in trade, as well as medicinally, being most valuable as a lubricant for the delicate works of watches, and is much employed as an ingredient in toilet soap, for its softening action on the skin. It forms a good remedy for chapped hands.

Gerard says:

'The oil newly pressed out of Sweet Almonds is a mitigator of pain and all manner of aches, therefore it is good in pleurisy and colic. The oil of Almonds makes smooth the hands and face of delicate persons, and cleanseth the skin from all spots and pimples.'

And Culpepper writes:

'The oil of both (Bitter and Sweet) cleanses the skin, it easeth pains of the chest, the temples being annointed therewith, and the oil with honey, powder of liquorice, oil of roses and white wax, makes a good ointment for dimness of sight.'

Culpepper also tells us of Almond butter, saying:

'This kind of butter is made of Almonds with sugar and rose-water, which being eaten with violets is very wholesome and commodious for students, for it rejoiceth the heart and comforteth the brain, and qualifieth the heat of the liver.'