

Prunus Amygdalus

MANDORLO – ALMOND – AMANDIER – MANDEL

ALMENDRO - МИНДАЛЬНОЕ ДЕРЕВО -アーモンドの木 - 杏仁樹 - زول

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The Almond tree is native to central-west Asia and, to a lesser extent, China. The Phoenicians introduced it to Sicily from Greece and it was for this reason the Romans called it the “Greek nut”.

It later spread to France and Spain and the rest of the Mediterranean. It reached America in the sixteenth century.

The almond tree belongs to the Rosaceae family and its subfamily Prunoideae.

The word “almond” (which is the edible seed of the almond tree, “Prunus Amygdales”), derives from the Latin word “Amygdalus”, which scholars believe to derive from the Phrygian name of the Greek goddess Cybele, which means Great Mother.

The almond tree is the first tree to awaken from its winter sleep and its flowers herald the return of spring. In America, it became widespread only after the voyages of Christopher Columbus. The Almond tree often joins romance with Greek mythology: Phyllis, a Thracian princess, meets Acamas, son of Theseus, who lands in her kingdom on his way to Troy.

The two young people fall madly in love, but Acamos is forced to leave along with the Achaeans to fight in the Trojan War.

The young princess, waits ten years after the end of the war, and when Acamas fails to return with the victorious ships, she dies of despair. The goddess Athena, moved by this poignant love story decides to turn Phyllis into a beautiful almond tree. Acamas, however is not dead and when he learns that Phyllis has been turned into tree he embraces her and she bursts into flower. The spring blossoming of the almond tree is Phyllis` response to her lover`s caresses.

BOTANICAL AND AGRICULTURAL FEATURES / PRODUCT DESCRIPTION:

- *FAMILY: Rosaceae*
- *MINIMUM TEMPERATURE: - 23° /28°*
- *MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 7/8 mt*
- *BLOOM: Spring*
- *COLOR FLOWER: Pinkish white*
- *PRUNING: February*
- *SOIL: Well-drained soil.*

ALMOND VARIETIES:

- *FERRAGNES:*

Hard shell, long nut.

Harvest: Mid September

- *GENKO:*

Self-fertile, hard shell, roundish fruit. Pink flower.

Harvest: Late September

- *MOLINI:*

Soft-shelled variety.

Harvest: Mid September

- *SANTA CATERINA:*

Self-fertile, soft shell.

Harvest: Early September

- *SUPERNOVA:*

Self-fertile, soft shell.

Harvest: Early September

- *TEXAS:*

Soft shell, plump.

Harvest: Late September

BLOSSOM:

In late winter when bad weather make spring still seem a long way off the early blossoming of the almond tree is a welcome sight. Because of its early blossom, the Ancient Jewish populations of Syria and Mesopotamia thought the tree to be a vigilant and attentive observer of the first signs of spring.



FORMS OF TRAINING AND ORNAMENTAL USES:



*HALF-STANDARD TREE:
Half-standard tree for the home
orchard.*



*STANDARD TREE:
Suitable for parks and tree-lined
avenues or roads in the country.*



*DWARF TREE:
Plants suitable for terraces,
balconies or small gardens.*

PLANTING:

The best period for planting runs from the beginning of autumn to the beginning of spring.

Place the root ball in a hole (60-70cm wide for a three-year-old plant grown in 30cm wide, 15 litre pot. Once placed in the hole, make sure that the top of the soil of the root ball is flush with the ground.

Fill the hole with the backsoil that has previously been removed. This should be broken down, crumbled and mixed with 20-30% compost.

Once the plant is in the hole, use a wooden support or pole to avoid uprooting in case of wind.

Using plastic ties secure the plant to the pole at a height of about 1 meter, leave enough room to allow for the growth of the plant

With the remaining backsoil make a well around the base of the plant, approximately 60-70 cm in diameter with a 15cm lip for three-year-old plants grown in 15 litre pots with a 30cm diameter. The well helps ensure the proper irrigation of the plant. It prevents water dispersion and allows water to reach the root system.

Fill the well with a 10/15 cm layer of pinewood chips. In addition to slowing the growth of weeds, the chips also help conserve moisture and stop the soil from drying out.

Water well just after planting and repeat every 7/10 days during the growing season.

*HOW TO PLANT
THREE YEAR-OLD FRUIT TREE
IN A 15 LITRE VASE*



HEALTH BENEFITS:

Almonds have many beneficial effects all of which contribute to our general well-being and health.

We can benefit from the properties of almonds not only by including them in our diet, but also by using products that derive from the nuts, such as almond oil.

Sweet almond oil stimulates digestion and improves bowel functions. The oil stands out for its lubricating and emollient properties and helps keeps our intestine healthy. It is a natural laxative and can be used to treat constipation naturally. It should however be used in moderation as it is high in fat and calories.

Almonds are also useful in the fight against “bad” LDL cholesterol thanks to their monounsaturated and polyunsaturated and are recommended in the diet of people with high cholesterol levels.

Almonds can also help prevent diabetes. Mothers who have just given birth should be aware that they help improve the unsightly stretch marks that may form during pregnancy.

They also help maintain the correct sugar levels in the blood and when massaged into the body and almond oil for the skin is considered an excellent remedy for stress. Walnuts too share many of the beneficial properties of almonds.

As almonds are rich in a variety of different nutrients, they help strengthen our bones by increasing bone mineral density.

This is why almonds should always be a part of the diet of the elderly and of sufferers of osteoporosis.

Almonds contain iron and vitamins and can help fight anemia making them a valuable food source for people with an iron deficiency. They are also particularly rich in vitamins from the vitamin B group. Thanks to its high vitamin content, almond oil is a useful remedy for the common cold.

Amongst other things, it is also extremely good for the hair and can be used to treat dandruff, hair loss and the early onset of grey

hair.

Almond milk is an energetic and refreshing drink and helps maintain good mental balance. It has both anti-depressant and anti-inflammatory properties. Do not drink too much though, as it is high in calories.

NUTRITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

100 g of fresh almonds contain 575 calories (15.3% carbohydrate, 12.8% protein, 71.9% fat).

| <i>Energy Value (Calories)</i> | <i>575</i> | <i>kcal</i> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| <i>Protein</i> | <i>21,22</i> | <i>g</i> |
| <i>Carbohydrates</i> | <i>21,67</i> | <i>g</i> |
| <i>Sugars</i> | <i>3,89</i> | <i>g</i> |
| <i>Fat</i> | <i>49,42</i> | <i>g</i> |
| <i>Saturated Fat</i> | <i>3,731</i> | <i>g</i> |
| <i>Monounsaturated Fat</i> | <i>30,889</i> | <i>g</i> |
| <i>Polyunsaturated Fat</i> | <i>12,7</i> | <i>g</i> |
| <i>Cholesterol</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>mg</i> |
| <i>Dietary Fiber</i> | <i>12,2</i> | <i>g</i> |
| <i>Sodium</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>mg</i> |
| <i>Alcohol</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>g</i> |

IN THE KITCHEN

SBRISOLONA (A TRADITIONAL ITALIAN BAKE):

INGREDIENTS:

- *200 g cornmeal*
- *2 egg yolks*
- *150 g peeled almonds*
- *200 g sugar*
- *teaspoon vanilla extract*
- *50 g unpeeled almonds*
- *200 g butter at room temperature*
- *grated rind of one lemon*



METHOD:

Mix the flour with the sugar, vanilla and lemon zest. Chop the peeled almonds coarsely and mix them with the softened butter. Tip the almonds into the flour and mix well, then add one egg yolk at a time. Mix together well. Using your fingers, crumble the mixture and place roughly in a 26 cm in diameter buttered baking tin. Decorate the surface with unpeeled almonds. Bake at 180°C for about an hour until lightly browned. Leave to cool in the tin before turning out and serving.

FOR A GLUTEN-FREE RECIPE: replace the corn flour with gluten-free flour.

FOR A VEGAN RECIPE: replace the butter with margarine and omit the eggs.

CRUNCHY ALMOND CARAMEL:

METHOD:

- 300 g whole almonds, shelled
- 300 g sugar
- Oil or butter for greasing

METHOD:

Butter or oil a marble slab or tape a piece of oven paper to the work surface. Put the sugar in a large shallow pan and caramelize slightly over a low heat.

Add the almonds to the caramel and mix together well. Cook again for a few minutes until the sugar darkens and becomes like dark honey. Be careful not to burn the caramel!

Remove from the heat and tip out quickly, spreading out and flattening the mixture. Before it cools completely, cut into pieces with a buttered knife.



ALMOND COOKIES:

INGREDIENTS:

- *250 g flour 00*
- *1 espresso cup olive oil*
- *1 espresso cup white wine*
- *1 espresso cup sugar*
- *1 teaspoon vanilla extract*

METHOD:

Mix all the ingredients together. Knead and roll out. With a pastry cutter or a small glass cut out the biscuits.

Put a peeled almond on each biscuit and sprinkle with sugar.

Place the biscuits on a baking sheet lined with oven paper.

Bake in the oven at 160 C until slightly browned.



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