

Vitex agnus-castus

(Chaste Tree, Vitex, Monk's Pepper)

Chastetree is a fast-growing, small tree or large shrub native to southern Europe and western Asia. The sage-scented gray-green leaves of Chastetree are shaped liked a hand, or palmate, and were once believed to have sedative effects. The flower is fragrant, lavender blooms upwardly-pointing, placed in terminal panicles and quite attractive to butterflies and bees. The tree is often planted where honey is marketed to promote excellent honey production. Blooms in the summertime. Chastetree likes sunny location with well-drained soil. It thrives in heat and blooms on new growth from the current season, so it can be pruned in spring if need be. In warm regions, it can be shaped into a small, single or multi-trunked tree. In cooler zones, chastetree grows as a modest-sized perennial shrub because it gets knocked back by extreme cold. Vitex agnus-castus will self-sow and can be invasive. It is advisable to cut back spent flowers in areas where seedlings can be problematic. Chastetree is used effectively in the mixed shrubbery border or as a specimen.



Plant Image

Landscape Information

French Name: Gattilier, Arbre au poivre, Agneau-chaste

Pronunciation: VY-teks AG-nus KAS-tus

Plant Type: Shrub

Origin: Southern Europe, Mediterranean, Western Asia

Heat Zones: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Hardiness Zones: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Uses: Specimen, Container, Windbreak, Medicinal, Wildlife, Pollution Tolerant / Urban

Size/Shape

Growth Rate: Fast

Tree Shape: Round

Canopy Symmetry: Irregular

Canopy Density: Medium

Canopy Texture: Fine

Height at Maturity: 3 to 5 m

Spread at Maturity: 1.5 to 3 meters

Time to Ultimate Height: 2 to 5 Years

Notes

In alternative medicines it is believed the berries are a tonic herb for both the male and female reproductive system. The leaves are believed to have the same effect but to a lesser degree.

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Flower Image

Botanical Description

Foliage

Leaf Arrangement: Opposite

Leaf Venation: Pinnate

Leaf Persistence: Deciduous

Leaf Type: Palmately Compound

Leaf Blade: Less than 5

Leaf Margins: Entire

Leaf Textures: Smooth

Leaf Scent: Pleasant

Color(growing season): Green

Color(changing season): Yellow

Flower

Flower Showiness: True

Flower Size Range: 10 - 20

Flower Type: Raceme

Flower Sexuality: Monoecious (Bisexual)

Flower Scent: Pleasant

Flower Color: Purple

Seasons: Spring, Summer

Trunk

Trunk Susceptibility to Breakage: Suspected to breakage

Number of Trunks: Can be trained to one trunk

Trunk Esthetic Values: Not Showy

Fruit

Fruit Type: Berry

Fruit Showiness: False

Fruit Size Range: 0 - 1.5, 1.5 - 3

Fruit Colors: Brown

Seasons: Spring, Summer

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Leaf Image

Horticulture Management

Tolerance

Frost Tolerant: Yes

Heat Tolerant: Yes

Drought Tolerant: Yes

Salt Tolerance: Good

Requirements

Soil Requirements: Clay, Loam, Sand

Soil Ph Requirements: Acidic, Neutral, Alkaline

Water Requirements: Moderate, Low

Light Requirements: Full

Management

Toxity: Yes

Susceptibility to Pests and Diseases: No

Pruning Requirement: Needed, to develop a strong structure

Fruit/ Leaves/ Flowers litter: No

Surface Rooting: No

Life Span: Less than 25

Edible Parts:

Plant Propagations: Seed, Cutting

MORE IMAGES



Fruit Image



Bark Image



Other Image