

269. *PIMENTA DIOICA* (L.) Merr. (MYRTACEAE) — Allspice, Jamaica Pepper, Clove Pepper

Allspice of commerce is the dried unripe fruit, used as a condiment, in mixed spices as in pickles, ketchup, baked goods, and in flavoring sausages and curing meats. Allspice powder consists of whole ground dried fruit. In Jamaica, a local drink, "pimento dram", is made of ripe fruits and rum. A volatile oil, extracted from the spice and leaves, is used to flavor essences and perfumes, and as a source of eugenol and vanillin. Bahamians make a pleasing tea from the leaves. Saplings are used as walking sticks and umbrella handles.

Reported to be anodyne, antioxidant, bactericidal, carminative, fungicidal, stimulant, and stomachic, allspice is a folk remedy for corns, neuralgia, and rheumatism.<sup>32</sup> Jamaicans take the fruit decoction for colds, menorrhagia and stomachache; Costa Ricans take the leaf infusion as a carminative and stomachic, useful for diabetes; Guatemalans apply it externally for bruises and rheumatic pain; Cubans drink the refreshing tea as depurative, stimulant, and tonic.<sup>42</sup> Aromatic, carminative, and stimulant, the spice and oil are used medicinally for diarrhea, dyspepsia, and flatulence.

Dry, unripe fruits, the allspice of commerce, contains 2 to 5% essential oil with *circa* 35% eugenol, 40 to 45% eugenolmethylether, caryophyllene, (–)-ox-phellandrene, cineole, palmitic acid, fatty oils, resin, sugar, starch, malic acid, calcium oxalate, and tannin.<sup>33</sup> Purselove et al.<sup>64</sup> compare the berry and leaf oils, mentioning, in addition to the above, cymene, carene, limonene, myrcene, ocimenes, pinene, sabinene, terpinenes, terpinolene, thujene, cadinenes, calamene, copaene, curcumene, elemene, gurgunene, humulenes, isocaryophyllene, muurolenes, selinenes, etc. Per 100 g, ground allspice is reported to contain 263 calories (1099 kJ), 8.5 g H<sub>2</sub>O, 6.1 g protein, 8.7 g fat, 72.1 g total carbohydrate, 21.6 g fiber, 4.6 g ash, 661 mg Ca, 113 mg P, 7 mg Fe, 135 mg Mg, 77 mg Na, 1044 K, 1 mg Zn, 540 IU vitamin A, 0.101 mg thiamine, 0.063 mg riboflavin, 2.86 mg niacin, and 39 mg ascorbic acid. There are 61 mg phytosterols.<sup>89</sup>

**Toxicity** — Eugenol, the principal constituent of leaves and fruits, is toxic in large quantities and causes contact dermatitis. Allspice itself is irritant to the skin.<sup>6</sup> Of 408 patients with hand eczema, 19 showed positive patch test reaction to allspice.