312. *SCHINUS MOLLE* L. (ANACARDIACEAE) — Peppertree, Peruvian Mastic Tree

Berries used in syrups, vinegar, beverage (Peru), wine (Chile), and as a pepper substitute, when berries are dried and ground up (Africa). Leaves used as a dye, have a peppery odor when crushed. Leaves so rich in oil that if fragments are placed in water, the oil is expelled with such force that pieces twist and jerk as if by spontaneous motion. Resin exudes from trees, known as American mastic. Plants make a good hedge, and are often planted for ornamental purposes along streets, for which purpose they are not well suited as they spread too much and branch too close to ground. Has been used as an adulterant of black pepper.[3] Chileans make a vinegar-like brew by steeping mashed berries in water. Spaniards macerate husked fruits in water, steeping for 3 days to yield 35% alcohol. The plant shows up in religious artifacts or idols among some Chilean Amerindians. Wood, used as a fuel,[63] seems to be immune to termites.[3]

The balsam, resin, or bark decoction are used in folk remedies for tumors and warts[4] from Mexico to Peru and Brazil. Reported to be astringent, balsamic, collyrium, diuretic, emmenagogue, masticatory, piscicide, purgative, stomachic, tonic, viricidal, and vulnerary, peppertree is a folk remedy for amenorrhea, apostemes, blenorrhagia, bronchitis, cataracts, dysmenorrhea, gingivitis, gonorrhea, gout, ophthalmia, rheumatism, sores, swellings, tuberculosis, ulcers, urethritis, urogenital and venereal disorders, warts, and wounds.[32,33] The juice of the leaves was employed in ophthalmia and rheumatism; the decoction used in washing prolapsed uterus. The bark is employed in Colombia for diarrhea, hemoptysis, and rheumatism.[57] Mexicans steep the berries in pulque for 3 days to make the beverage called capalote.

Fruits contain 3.4 to 5.2% essential oil with alpha- and beta-phellandrene, beta spathulene, D-limonene, silvestrene, alpha- and beta-pinene, perillaldehyde, carvacrol, myrcene, camphene, *o*-ethyl phenol, *p*-cymene, *p*-cymol, etc.[33,288] The bark contains *circa* 23% tannin, and, like *S. terebinthifolius,* is said to be a source of Aroeira resin, with *circa* 55% resin, 40% gums, etc. Leaves contain 0.2 to 1.% essential oil with phellandrene and carvacrol, myricetin, quercetin, kaempferol, leucodelphinidin, lignoceric acid, and beta-sitosterol.[33] Dry seeds contain 8.1 to 8.5% protein and 7.7 to 10.6% oil.[21] Analyses in Egypt, where the fruits are used as substitutes for black pepper, showed 6% moisture, 5.47% ash, 3.31% acid insoluble ash, and 15.5% crude fiber.[289]

Toxicity — Children are frequently poisoned from eating the fruits, leading to nausea, diarrhea, gastroenteritis, headache, and lassitude.[3]