

94. *COFFEA ARABICA* L. (RUBIACEAE) — Arabica Coffee, Arabian Coffee, Abyssinian Coffee

Dried seeds or “beans” are roasted, ground, and brewed to make one of the two important beverages in the western world. In its native Ethiopia, used as a masticatory since ancient times, it is also cooked in butter to make rich flat cakes. In Arabia a fermented drink from the pulp is consumed. Coffee is widely used as a flavoring, as in ice cream, pastries, candies, and liqueurs. Source of caffeine, dried ripe seeds are used as a stimulant, nervine, and diuretic, acting on central nervous system, kidneys, heart, and muscles. Indonesians and Malaysians prepare an infusion from dried leaves. Coffee pulp and parchment, used as manures and mulches, are occasionally fed to cattle in India. Coffeelite, a type of plastic, made from coffee beans. Wood is hard, dense, durable, takes a good polish, and is suitable for tables, chairs, and turnery. Coffee with iodine is used as a deodorant.³³ Caffeine has been described as a natural herbicide, selectively inhibiting germination of seeds of *Amaranthus spinosus*.¹³⁴ Caffeine is a widespread additive in over-the-counter diet pills, pain killers, and stimulants.⁶¹ In 1982, radio news reports announced that an enzyme from green coffee beans can convert Type O to Type B blood. Experiments with animals and three human volunteers confirmed the long-sought possibility (WTOP News, January 14, 1982).

Reported to be analgesic, anaphrodisiac, anorexic, antidotal, cardiotonic, CNS-stimulant, counterirritant, diuretic, hypnotic, lactagogue, nervine, and stimulant, coffee is a folk remedy for asthma, atropine-poisoning, fever, flu, headache, jaundice, malaria, migraine, narcosis, nephrosis, opium poisoning, sores, and vertigo.^{32,33} Coffee enemas have been suggested in asthma and cancer.⁴⁹

*Hager's Handbook*³³ devotes pages of fine print to the chemicals reported from coffee, some of the more hazardous ones, perhaps, being acetaldehyde, adenine, caffeine, chlorogenic acid, guaiacol, tannic acid, theobromine, and trigonelline. Tyler³⁷ produces a chart comparing various caffeine sources to which I have added rounded figures from Palotti.¹³⁵