

1. *ABELMOSCHUS MOSCHATUS* Medic. (MALVACEAE) — Musk Okra, Muskmallow, Ambrette



Cultivated for the seeds which have a musk-like odor and yield the exalting agent ambrette, an aromatic oil used in perfumery. Ambrette seed and its tincture are used in vermouths and bitters. The oil and its absolute are used in creams, detergents, lotions, and soaps. Arabs use the seeds for flavoring coffee. Seeds chewed to sweeten the breath.² Seeds burned as incense.⁴² Tender leaves, shoots, and pods are eaten as vegetables. Seeds are also insecticidal, especially on woolens against moths. Stems yield a bast fiber used for sails and cloth. Plants are often grown as ornamentals.

Tagalogs of the Philippines use a decoction for cancer of the stomach.⁴ The mucilaginous seeds are used for emollients and demulcents. Seeds, pulverized and made into a paste with milk, are used to treat prickly heat and itch. They are used for hysteria and other nervous disorders. For internal use, seeds are antihysterical, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, carminative, diuretic, litholytic, stimulant, stomachic, and tonic, and are used for gonorrhoea, nervous disorders, prickly heat, spermatorrhoea. Seeds are inhaled for dryness of the throat. Trinidad people steep the seed in rum or water for asthma, chest congestion, cold, flu, snakebite, and worms.⁴² Roots and leaves are used for poultice. Poultices are recommended for boils, cystitis, fever, headache, rheumatism, swellings, and varicose veins. The roots and leaves are decocted for gonorrhoea and rheumatism.¹⁶ Chinese use the plant for headache.

Upon distillation, oil of seeds yields furfural; the chief constituent is farnesol. Seeds