



BLDEA's  
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## Castor oil plant



*Ricinus communis*, the castor bean or castor oil plant, is a species of perennial flowering plant in the spurge family, Euphorbiaceae. It is the sole species in the monotypic genus, *Ricinus*, and subtribe, Ricininae.

Scientific name: *Ricinus communis*

Accepted Name:

*Ricinus communis* L.

Family:

EUPHORBIACEAE

Used in:

Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Folk, Homeopathy, Sowa Rigpa, Chinese,  
Modern

Habit:

Shrub

Distribution:

This species is probably native to North East tropical Africa, globally distributed in the Pantropics and is also widely cultivated throughout. Within India, it is found wild in scrub forests of the outer Himalayas, it has been cultivated through the ages in Africa and India, now it is found almost throughout India upto an altitude of 2000 m.

Parts used The root of this plant is also useful as an ingredient of various prescriptions for nervous diseases and rheumatic affections such as lumbago, pleurodynia and sciatica In the Indian system of medicine, the leaf, root and seed oil of this plant have been used for the treatment of inflammation and liver disorders as they ...

Ricinoleic acid	85–95
Oleic acid	2–6
<u>Linoleic acid</u>	1–5
$\alpha$ -Linolenic acid	0.5–1
Stearic acid	0.5–1
Palmitic acid	0.5–1
Dihydroxystearic acid	0.3–0.5
Others	0.2–0.5

## Uses

Annually 270,000–360,000 tonnes (600–800 million pounds) of castor oil are produced for a variety of uses. In the food industry, food grade castor oil is used in food additives, flavorings, candy (*e.g.*, [polyglycerol polyricinoleate](#) or PGPR in chocolate), as a mold inhibitor, and in

packaging. Polyoxyethylated castor oil is also used in the food industries.<sup>1]</sup>

In India, Pakistan and Nepal food grains are **preserved** by the application of castor oil. It stops rice, wheat, and **pulses** from rotting. For example, the legume **pigeon pea** is commonly available coated in oil for extended storage.

#### Traditional medicine

Advertisement of castor oil as a medicine by Scott & Bowne Company,  
19th century

Use of castor oil as a laxative is attested to in the circa 1550 BC Ebers Papyrus and was in use several centuries earlier. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has categorized castor oil as "generally recognized as safe and effective" (GRASE) for over-the-counter use as a laxative with its major site of action the small intestine, where it is digested into ricinoleic acid.

Although used in traditional medicine to induce labor in pregnant women, there is insufficient evidence that castor oil is effective to dilate the cervix or induce labor.

Castor oil has been used in cosmetic products included in creams and as a moisturizer. Small amounts of castor oil are frequently used in cold process soap to increase lathering in the finished bar. It also has been used to enhance hair conditioning in other products and for supposed anti-dandruff properties.

It's made by extracting oil from the seeds of the *Ricinus communis* plant. These seeds, which are known as castor beans, contain a toxic enzyme called ricin. However, the heating process that castor oil undergoes deactivates it, allowing the oil to be used safely.

Castor oil is gotten from processing the castor seeds. It is usually extracted by cold-pressing the seed, squeezing out the oil and then refining it to remove all its toxins. First you will need to get hold of the castor seeds, remove the shell either by hand or with the aid of machines used for deshelling seeds.