

Ethnobotanical Use of Plants Part 4 - The American Indian

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Jojoba

The Indians and Mexicans have for a long time used jojoba oil as a hair conditioner and restorer as well as in medicine.

But earlier use was recorded in 1798 by Francesco Clavijero who wrote that the plant was celebrated for its medicinal value especially curing the suppression of the urine from mucous concretions, for facilitating childbirth and for wounds. The oil which is derived from it is an excellent remedy for cancer and is also edible.

The Apache Indians used the plant for the healing of wounds. The Seri Indians used the plant for sores on the head. To relieve eye soreness, the fruit was ground and wrapped in a cloth, which was squeezed and the liquid put into the eyes. Recent research has suggested that the oil is anti-inflammatory in its action. The American Indian tribes used jojoba consistently for the treatment of wounds and swellings. The natives of the American Sonora desert used jojoba oil for hairdressings, skin salves, medicinal preparations and food.

They attributed magical powers to the oil: legends that it could cure cuts, scratches and sores or promote hair growth were widely accepted.