



## ĀVIŠAN

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**ĀVIŠAN**, wild thyme. The genus *Thymus* of the family Labiatae (mint family) comprises a number of fragrant aromatic undershrubs, with very small leaves and whorls of small purplish, nectar-bearing flowers in the axils of the leaves or at the ends of the branches. The Kotschy thyme (*āvīcān-e bārīk*, *Thymus kotschyanus* Boiss. et Hohen., locally called *avīcām*, *avcām*, *ābācān*, *āyācūm* [Alborz, Lar], *odcān*, *ūcān*, *oāna-ye kūhī*, *ša'tar*, *kaklik-oti* [Šarafkāna in Azarbaijan], *kālvāc* [some northern districts], *āzorba* [Ganjnāma of Hamadān, used for both *Thymus kotschyanus* and *Thymus serpillum*], *jowcān-e cātrāzī* [in the bazaars of Tehran], Ar. *ša'tar/sa'tar*) is a low perennial, strongly aromatic, wild undershrub with many varieties distributed in the higher regions of northwest Iran, in the Alborz mountains, and in Khorasan. Dried leaves and floral tops, which contain oil of thyme, are used for flavoring soups, sausages, sauces, and various vegetable and meat dishes. Aqua or 'araq-e *āvīcān*, used for flavoring sherbets, is obtained by soaking dried leaves and floral tops in water. Around Tehran dried *āvīcān* is used with a refreshing drink made of a mixture of yogurt, water, and salt (*dūg*).

Mother-of-thyme (*Thymus serpillum*, locally *oāc*, *oāma*, *āzorba*) is another widespread thyme of Iran. Both thymes are carminative, stomachic, diuretic, digestive, and flatulent. They may be used for liver and respiratory disorders. *Maḳzan al-adwīa* (p. 256) and *Toḥfa-ye Ḥakīm Mo'men* (pp. 563-64) attribute the appetitive, diuretic, vermifuge, emmenagogue, and antacid properties of thyme.

*Āvīcān-e cātrāzī* is one of the species of the genus *Zataria*.



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