



CORNELIAN CHERRY

CORNELIAN CHERRY, the male cornel tree, a dogwood shrub with edible berries. Three species of cornel (genus *Cornus* L., fam. Cornaceae) are native to Persia: *C. australis* C.A.M., the female cornel tree (*sīāh-al*, etc.); *C. sanguinea* L., the “red dogwood” (*šaft*; *čapčapī*; and *C. mas* L., the male cornel tree, or “cornelian cherry,” commonly called *zoḡāl-aḡta*, a term that is properly applied only to its ripe berries (Sā’ī, I, pp. 259-60; Parsa, II, pp. 872-73, VIII, p. 52; Tābetī, 1326 Š./1947, pp. 92-93; idem, 1355 Š./1976, pp. 256-60).

The ripe berries of the cornelian cherry, which are slightly sour and astringent, are found in various shades of red. The shrub is abundant in the forests of Arasbārān in Azarbaijan, where it is called *zoḡāl*; in the ‘Ammārlū and Deylamān districts of Gīlān (Gīlakī: [*zūḡāl*] *aḡta*; Maḡ’ašī, p. 59; Pāyanda Langarūdī, p. 722; Tābetī, 1337 Š./1958, p. 165); and in the Qazvīn area (Jazāyerī, pp. 109-10). Cornelian cherries are eaten in season as a fancy fruit. In Gīlān the *aḡta* is also used to make a preserve (*morabbā*; for recipe, see Kāvar, p. 231), usually eaten instead of sugar with tea, and *aḡta kāmās*, a thick paste made with crushed boiled *aḡta* and seasoned with salt and the powdered fruit of Persian marjoram (*gol-par*; *Heracleum persicum* Desf.; see Kāvar, p. 238); the latter is particularly enjoyed by young girls.

Some medico-pharmacological and botanical authors of the Islamic period, essentially repeating Dioscorides (*De Materia Medica*, bk. 1 no. 108) and Galen (*Ketāb al-adwīa al-mofrada*, bk. 7, both tr. apud Ebn al-Bayṭār [d. 646/1248], II, pt. 4, pp. 11-12), include mention of the cornelian cherry and its medicinal properties, usually under the term *qarānīa* (< Gk. *kranía* or *kráneia* “cornel”);



for example, the Cordovan botanist Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad Ġāfeqī (d. after 560/1165) described the cornelian cherry as “a tree growing in cold mountains, with leaves like those of the chinaberry (azederach)” (apud Ebn al-Bayṭār, II, pt. 4, pp. 11-12; cf. the longer description by Anṭākī [d. 1008/1599], I, p. 222, s.v. *qorn* [< Lat. *cornus*]. A vernacular name that was misused by some Arabic authors to designate the *kranía* mentioned by Dioscorides and Galen was *morrān* (a term of uncertain origin), which properly designates *Fraxinus ornus* Pall., the manna, or flowering ash (Gk. *melía* > Ar. *mālīā*; Pers. *zabān-gonješk*; for the source of the confusion, as well as references to the authors concerned, see Dietrich, II, pp. 131 no. 48, 183 no. 95; cf. Tonokābonī, p. 798, s.v. *marrān*). Probably the earliest Persian author to describe it was the 10th-century pharmacologist Abū Maṣṣūr Mowaffaq Heravī, under the Persian term *zoqāl* (p. 177; cf. Tonokābonī, p. 452; ‘Aqīlī Ḳorāsānī, pp. 474-75); he classified its medical properties as cold and dry in the second degree, cholagogic, stomachic, and mildly astringent. In the Persian dictionary *Borhān-e qāte‘* (ed. Mo‘īn, III, p. 1523) the definition is given under *qarānīā*; Moḥammad-Pādšāh (*Ānand Rāj*, completed in India in 1306/1888; III, p. 2225) was probably the first lexicographer to record the new designation *zoḡāl-e aḳta*, adding a distich by Šā‘eb Tabrīzī (17th century) and the comment that sheep paunch stuffed with *zoḡāl-e aḳta* is delicious.

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