

California Pepper Tree



Presented by

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*Family: Anacardiaceae
(an-a-kard-ee-AY-see- ee)*

Genus: Schinus (SKY-nus)

Species: molle (Maw-ley)

Category: Trees

*Origin: Andes Mountains,
Peru*

*Other names:
false pepper
peppercorn tree*

- ❖ Evergreen
- ❖ Fast growth
- ❖ Graceful form
- ❖ Extreme tolerance of heat and drought
- ❖ Popular landscape tree
- ❖ Mediterranean climate





- * Grows quickly to 25-50 feet tall

- *Spreads wider with age and can live between 50-150 years

- *Thick gnarled trunk with rough grayish bark

- *Heavy main limbs with weeping branchlets

- *Bright green aromatic foliage is composed of compound leaves with many narrow 2" long leaflets

- *Fragrant yellow or white flowers in summer

- *Male or female flowers attract bees (dioecious)

- *Prolific small rose or red colored fruit in Fall

- *Litter issue is dry fruit, leaves and twigs

- *Wildlife use fruit

▣ The oldest pepper tree in California was planted by Fr. Antonio Peyri in the middle of the San Luis Rey Mission in Oceanside. The seeds were brought to the Mission in 1830 by a sailor from Peru. The tree still stands today.





In traditional medicine, *Schinus molle* was used in treating a variety of wounds and infections due to its antibacterial and antiseptic properties. It has also been used to relieve symptoms of depression, rheumatism and menstrual disorders. The leaves are used for natural dyeing of textiles in the Andean region. This practice dates back to pre-Columbian times. The Incas used the oil from the leaves in early mummification practices to preserve and embalm their dead.





Another tree in the Anacardiaceae family is *Schinus terebinthifolius* (SKY-nus the-reh-bin-thi-FOE-lee-us). Also known as Brazilian Pepper Tree. Origin: Brazil



- Evergreen
- Moderate growth rate
- Grows to 30-40'
- Rounded canopy of dark green foliage
- Compound leaves to 8" long with 5-13 oval 1-3" long leaflets
- Prefers regular watering
- Tolerant of poor soil, heat and cold temperatures down to 20 degrees F

References

- Ornamental trees For Mediterranean Climates ,Trees of San Diego, San Diego Horticulture Society, Don Walker and Steve Brigham, 2005
- University of California Agriculture and National Resources UC IPM <http://ipm.uucanr.edu/PMG/Garden?Plants/peppertree.html>
- California Invasive Plant Council <https://wwwcal-ipc.org/plants/profile/schinus-mole-profile/>
- A Tree Selection Guide <https://selectree.calpoly.edu/tree-detail/schinus-mole#content>
- Gardening Know How <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/trees/pepper-tree/California-pepper-tree-care.htm>