

Araucaria/ Christmas tree

Botanical Name: *Araucaria*

Common Name: Monkey Puzzle

Family: Araucariaceae

Hindi Name: क्रिसमसट्री

Part Used: Seeds

Araucaria is a genus of evergreen coniferous trees in the family *Araucariaceae*. They are mainly large trees with a massive erect stem, reaching a height of 5–80 metres. The horizontal, spreading branches grow in whorls and are covered with leathery or needle-like leaves. In some species, the leaves are narrow, awl-shaped and lanceolate, barely overlapping each other; in others they are broad and flat, and overlap broadly. The trees are mostly dioecious, with male and female cones found on separate trees. The female cones, usually high on the top of the tree, are globose, and vary in size among species from 7 to 25 centimetres diameter. They contain 80–200 large edible seeds, similar to pine nuts, though larger. The male cones are smaller, 4–10 cm long, and narrow to broad cylindrical, 1.5– 5.0 cm broad. Some of the species are relatively common in cultivation because of their distinctive, formal symmetrical growth habit. Several species are economically important for timber production. The edible large seeds of *A. araucana* also known as Araucaria nuts are eaten as food, particularly among people of Chile and southwest Argentina.

Pharmacological reports on genus *Araucaria* are used traditionally for medicinal purposes, with its resin and seeds being used to treat various ailments. It has demonstrated potential antispasmodic, bronchodilator, and vasodilator effects, as well as antiemetic activity. The tree's seeds are also edible and rich in nutrients. anti-ulcer, antiviral, neuro-protective, anti-depressant and anticoagulant.