

The Initiate's Crown of Thorns



The “Chaste Tree”

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Will you tell me the botanical name of the “*Agnus Castus*” plant, also what authority there is for supposing Christ was crowned with *Acanthus*, and if so are any of that family indigenous to Syria?

Paliurus australis (Christ’s Thorn) is spoken of by Loudon as the probable plant, of the order Rhamnaceae. He adds, Hasselquist thought it was a kind of *Rhamnus* (Buckthorn), called by Linnæus “*Spina Christi*.” The latter I have received from Syria, where it is common, and bears a small yellow berry.

W.N. GALE



Editorial response by Madame Blavatsky

Loudon describes the *Agnus Castus* as “a species of *Vitex* — the chaste tree,” from *αγνος*, a willow-like tree. This Greek term being similar to the word *αγνος*, “chaste,” it was surnamed the “chaste tree.” We do not know of any “authority” except *probability* that it was the *Acanthus* which was used for the “crown of thorns,” as it is a genus of herbaceous prickly plant, with thorns protruding from it, most common in Palestine and Asia Minor, though as common in India. It was used there and also in Syria and elsewhere as belonging to the paraphernalia of initiation during the MYSTERIES.

