

DIOSPYROS LOTUS (Ebenaceae)

A. E. Stahevitch

Biosystematics Research Institute, Saunders Bldg., Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C6

Readers of the Lotus Newsletter might be interested in the following item from antiquity\* :

Diospyros lotus (Lin. Sp. Plant. 1057). The Indian Date Plumb.

This species "is supposed to be a native of Africa, and was transplanted from thence into several parts of Italy, and also the south of France. *The fruit of this tree is by some supposed to be the Lotus, which Ulysies and his companions were enchanted with.* This is a tree of a middling growth in the warm parts of Europe, where there are several of them which are upward of thirty feet high; but particularly in the botanic garden at Padua there is one very old tree, which has been described by some of the former botanists, under the title of Guaicum Patavinum. This tree produces plenty of fruit every year, from the seeds of which many plants have been raised. In England there are none of these trees, but what have been raised within a few years past, in the physic garden at Chelsea."

\*From: Miller, P. 1768. The Gardeners Dictionary, 8th ed, pages unnumbered.  
London

The Gardeners Dictionary: containing the methods of cullination and improving the kitchen, fruit and flower garden, and also the pysick garden, wilderness, conservatory and vineyard, according to the practice of the present age; interspersed with the history of the plants, the characters of each genus, and the names of all particular species in Latin and English; and an explanation of all the terms used in botany and gardening.