

# Cloves

Cloves are one of the highly prized spices, widely recognized all over the world for their medicinal and culinary qualities. The spice buds are actually the "flower buds" from an evergreen rainforest tree native to Indonesian "spice islands".

Botanically, clove-spice belongs to the family of **Myrtaceae**, in the genus; **Syzygium**, and scientifically named as ***Syzygium aromaticum***.



At their early stages of development, flower buds are pale in color which gradually turn into green, and, finally, develop into bright-red clove buds at the time of harvesting. The buds generally picked up by hand when they reach 1.5-2 cm in length, sundried and graded before dispatching to the markets.



Structurally, each bud consists of a long calyx; terminating into four spreading sepals and four unopened petals. These closed petals develop into a small ball (dome) at the top. The sweet aroma of cloves comes from an essential oil, *eugenol*, in them.

## **Benefits** -

Studies have indicated Cloves are known to have antioxidant, antiseptic, local anesthetic, anti-inflammatory, rubefacient (warming and soothing). The spice contains health benefiting essential oils such as eugenol.

## **Culinary uses**

In order to keep the fragrance and flavor intact, clove is generally grounded just before preparing dishes and added at the last moment in the kitchen, since prolonged cooking results in evaporation of its essential oils.