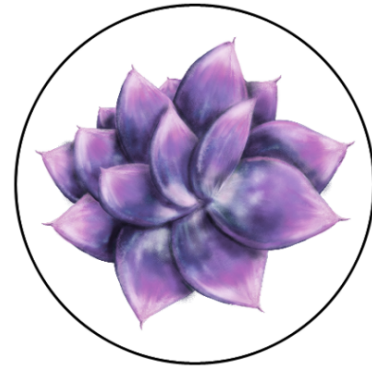


APIROCOMA

- 🌴 **Height:** Up to 6ft
- 🌴 **Classification:** Eccentric
- 🌴 **Life expectancy:** Over 100 years



The ariocoma is an attractive desert plant that grows in tall, impressive stacks that are associated with shamanic wisdom. The name comes from apeiros, the Greek word for infinite (referring to the fact that they seem to be able to grow indefinitely tall), and kawma, the Arabic word for stack.

Physiology



The ariocoma is a tough, spiky-leaved plant of approximately 4 inches' diameter which grows in rosettes. As it grows it repeatedly produces new sets of leaves on top of itself to grow in a stack. Research remains patchy but these stacks have been observed growing up to 6ft tall. The only limit to this height appears to be their lifespan, which is also unknown but seems to top out at 100 years or so, according to the burrows in which it is deliberately grown.

It grows in a variety of different colours, usually on the warmer end of the palette, although a lilac version is particularly striking and well known.

Reproduction

Its spores grow on the underneath of each leaf, and the plant relies on the wind for dispersal. The taller the plant, the better it is at catching the breeze and dispersing its spores further afield.

Geographical Distribution

The ariocoma grows in the deserts of Oplayn.

Populations

There are currently no particular populations of these plants, although they are locally common. Ariocoma 'forests' can make a useful navigational mark in the desert.

Position in Ecosystem

In terms of its position in the ecosystem, the apirocoma is surprisingly self-sufficient. It doesn't rely on insects or other creatures to disperse its spores, and it's hard for grazers to eat. The many crevices that its spiky leaves create are effective hiding places for several insect species, and a few insects that can draw nutrients from the leaves.

Pollen/Spore Dispersers

None - it relies on the wind for spore dispersal.

Grazers

A few insect species burrow into their leaves.

Other Users

This plant's tendency to grow tall allows it to be seen from a distance away. For this reason, several species, sapient or not, use them for navigation. This makes them particularly useful for [\[whales\]](#) during their migrations over the largely featureless or changing deserts.

Technology

The apirocoma's lack of tangible uses makes it something of a stranger to the more technically minded of Kaleida. Those seeking its uses are better advised to seek out its spiritual contribution to its world.

Agriculture

Apirocoma are not valuable for food or expirable materials such as string, so are not likely ever to be farmed.

However, some shamans deliberately plant and nurture them around their dens. While this has little to no tangible benefit, they are intended as an indication of where the shaman lives; a specialised garden of sorts.

History

Apirocoma have had a small impact on the history of Kaleida, mostly as a navigational tool in the desert. Without them, some individuals may have become lost and perished.



The contribution of this plant to Kaleidan culture, especially that of the kasulam, mukash, and [\[whales\]](#), is notable enough to include here.

Food

Apirocoma do not produce food so do not appear in any cuisine. Its leaves are nutritionally rich so they may be offered to the malnourished, but few would choose to include ground apirocoma on their meals for pleasure.

Art

In some Kaleidan cultures, these plants are drawn as a vertical strike. This can symbolise positivity, sometimes as literal as the concept of “yes”. This is due to the apirocoma’s role as a desert guide.

They also symbolise wisdom and knowledge, as the apirocoma forests tended by the shamans are often places where they discuss issues of spiritual importance with their followers and community.

Language

The vertical stripes mentioned above, a stylised version of tall apirocomas, can be used to mean “yes” in written conversations, although writing is still very rare on Kaleida.

Religion and Spirituality

Some shamans (usually kasulam) use the grandiosity and symbolism of a mature apirocoma stack in the imagery they employ as part of their role. In more established communities, dens passed from one shaman to the next have apirocomas deliberately planted around the entrance, so that visitors must walk through mini forests of them. These may be carefully chosen based on their colour.

While these shamanic apirocoma forests offer little in the way of a tangible benefit, they tend to stake out the outdoor area in which a shaman practices. Shamans and their followers may settle within the apirocoma 'forest' to talk together.

Festivals

[I'd like to make up a shamanic event to help bond the community together, which is the equivalent of a kitchen party: the community goes to the shaman's apirocoma forest. I'm not sure what they'd do there though. I'll come back to this.]

Politics

Apirocoma are associated with power, by virtue of being associated with shamanic knowledge and wisdom. This symbolism rarely carries over to the tribal leaders, however.

Utopian / Dystopian Qualities

This is one of those plants that serves the utopian slant of Kaleida on a meta level: in symbolic terms they are benevolent guides.

Economy

As with politics, the power associated with the apirocoma doesn't tend to translate as economic power, although it may obliquely impact it from time to time.

Finance / Business

Apirocoma are little to no use for trading, but they do indicate the presence of a shaman. Whether or not the shaman offers their services for free is another question.

Ground apirocoma is useful for improving the health of malnourished herbivores and omnivores, but it is not well known, even among shamans and healers, for this.

Education

To walk (or more commonly, sit or stand) within a shaman's apirocoma forest usually involves sharing knowledge or wisdom, so they are associated with these concepts.

Healthcare and Medicine

Apirocomas are associated with spiritual care rather than healthcare, but the association of mind, body, and spirit can sometimes muddy the waters. With that said, apirocoma leaves can be ground up as a healthsome addition to food, although they don't tend to taste particularly good. Best sprinkled on other food as a supplement. Most shamans themselves are not aware of this.

Credits

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Want to upgrade to an Infographic or video, or expand your setting into a worldbuilding project? Email me on hello@thecharacterconsultancy.co.uk and I will be happy to help you!

~Hayley, The Character Consultancy