

# KOSMINA

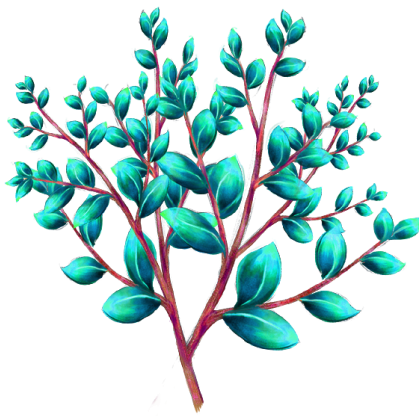
- ▶ **Height:** Up to 30 meters
- ▶ **Classification:** Eccentric
- ▶ **Life expectancy:** 80 - 140 years



A tree with succulent leaves. Its name comes from the Greek word for gem and the Arabic word for water. Kosmina is believed by some to have medicinal properties.

## Physiology

The kosmina is a moderately large tree with slender branches and succulent leaves. The branches are slender to allow the plant to bend in strong winds, and it tends to thrive and grow tall on land close to the sea, where other trees tend to grow stunted or misshapen.



The leaves are translucent and look particularly gem-like from a distance. Spores grow on the whole surface of each leaf.

There are a few species of kosmina, each with their own leaf shape and colour. The colours generally range from yellow to blue, with the blue tinge coming from a protective layer that grows on the leaf surfaces in particularly harsh, salty environments (see left).

## Medical Conditions

There are no current medical conditions associated with kosmina. It is better known as a medicinal plant than one that becomes sickly.



## Geographical Distribution



Kosmina can grow in most environments, but tends to out-compete other plants, including trees, on coastal cliffs and small islands.



## Position in Ecosystem



The leaves are edible but contain compounds that can cause the eyes and nose to stream. As such they have decongestant qualities. Most animals do not like to eat this plant for this reason, but some species develop a taste for it.



## History



This tree has come to the attention of some neolithic species, who believe it to have medicinal properties. For that reason, these trees are prized. No tribal battles have been fought over them, but some tribes may become possessive over trees that exist within, or at the borders of, their territories.

## Evolutionary / Prehistory

Kosmina has evolved a few adaptations to allow it to thrive in environments that other plants merely survive. One of these is the array of compounds in the leaves which make it taste 'medicinal' and to give them decongestant properties. For the plant, this reduces the number of insects that can tolerate its leaves.

Its presence on coastal cliffs has also given the plant's spores ample opportunity to reach any nearby coastal islands, so it has a tendency to grow on these where few other plants can.



Kosmina has an interesting position in Kaleidian culture. It can be eaten and has a pleasant taste in small amounts, but is unsuitable as a staple, and is believed to have medical properties which have formed much of its cultural significance. Its appearance also contributes to its popularity in Kaleidian homes.

### **Food**

The leaves of this tree can be eaten but they have a strong medicinal taste. As such they may be eaten as a mouth-freshener - though not a sweet per se, as the leaves are savoury. They are too potent to be eaten in large quantities.

### **Art**

Art is in its infancy on Kaleida, but some neolithics appreciate the natural beauty of the kosmina's leaves and hang a bunch in their homes. This can be a convenient way to pick one as a mouth-freshener, so hanging one where the light can attractively catch the leaves is not uncommon.

### **Social Dynamics**

Offering a kosmina leaf is a sign of hospitality, especially to those who have just come back from a trek in an unpleasant environment, such as a desert walk.

## **Politics**

The presence of kosmina leaves on a tribe's land can be politically sensitive. It may prompt raids, or it may encourage trading or other relationship-building. The kosmina plant is believed to have more medicinal uses than only as a decongestant, so individuals with sick friends or family may attribute medicinal properties to the plant and attempt to obtain kosmina leaves or other plant parts on that basis. However, this may be wishful thinking.

Occasionally, claims that the tree's roots contain particular medicinal properties that the leaves lack has prompted damage to trees. Similar stories have occurred with some neolithics believing that trees that are harder to reach - such as ones that grow on coastal islands in treacherous waters - are more potent or can cure more serious illnesses. Damage to trees or non-tribe members becoming stranded on islands have created tensions between tribes in the past.

## **Religion / Spirituality**

The believed (but not proven) medicinal properties of the kosmina plant has contributed to a form of medical spirituality - Kaleida's equivalents of shamanism. So far, Kaleida's neolithics have not agreed to assistance in arranging clinical trials for their native medicinal plants, and this uncertainty has invested tribal medics with a sense of mystery and potency.

The full impact of this on Kaleidian neolithic life is still being researched.

## **Economy**

Kosmina enjoys a fairly esteemed position in Kaleidia's economy. However, it is potentially based on misinformation as several of the claims made about it are unverified by science.

### **Money / Trading System**

Kosmina can be a prized item for trading due to its medicinal properties, although its unproven properties in this area may be problematic. Kaleidian neolithics are well aware of the variable nature (at best) of plants, so usually when kosmina medicine is believed to have underperformed, fault is attributed to the source plant.

### **Major Businesses and Trade**

While there are no major businesses or trade routes on Kaleida (except for the developing tourism trade fuelled by off-planet civilizations), medicinal products and services are sought-after.

Confirmation bias, spontaneous remissions of illnesses, and other factors may have been responsible for the creation of rumours about the particular effectiveness of specific kosmina trees. Leaves (and occasionally other parts) of these trees are locally prized over less well-regarded trees.

Shamans combine tree parts of various effectiveness with rituals to heal individuals, and this also stimulates local trade.

### **Education**

Medicinal plants are always of interest to those who wish to know more. Extremely limited studies have been done on kosmina by chemists in the field (read: on vacation on Kaleida) and discussion is in progress for the mukash to allow for the plant to be tested in a clinical environment.

### **Medicine**

Off-world civilizations are keen to test kosmina for its effectiveness as a medicine for various illnesses. At the current time however, none of the medical claims associated with this plant, beyond its effectiveness as a decongestant, have been proven as the mukash have refused to allow for clinical trials to go ahead.

### **Distribution of Goods**

Kosmina is one of the more portable products, as it is effective as a decongestant and home decoration in small quantities, and its branches are slender and light. They can however be difficult to break as the plant is evolved to bend in strong winds without snapping.

### **Credits**

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Kaleida is © [The Character Consultancy](#)

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~Hayley, The Character Consultancy