

Mitragyna speciosa (Kratom)

An Informational Guide for Visitors & Enthusiasts

Mitragyna speciosa is a tropical evergreen tree belonging to the Rubiaceae family (the same family as coffee and gardenias). It is native to Southeast Asia, thriving in the warm, humid climates of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and surrounding regions. In Thailand, this remarkable plant has deep cultural roots and is known locally as กระท่อม.

Common Names

English: Kratom (also spelled Krathom or Kratum in some contexts)

Thai: กระท่อม (Krathom or Kratom)

Regional Thai names: อีถ้าง (Ee-thaang – central Thailand), ท่อม (Thom – southern Thailand)

The Characteristic Leaves

The leaves are typically large, glossy, and dark green with an oblong-ovate shape. They feature prominent veining, often with reddish midribs in mature specimens, and can reach 15–20 cm in length. These distinctive leaves are the primary part of the plant traditionally utilised.



Characteristic leaf of *Mitragyna speciosa* (Kratom)

Traditional Uses in Thai & Southeast Asian Culture

For centuries, the leaves of *Mitragyna speciosa* have played a valued role in the daily life and folk traditions of Thailand and neighbouring countries. Fresh leaves were commonly chewed or prepared as a tea or decoction, particularly by farmers and manual labourers seeking to sustain energy and stamina during long hours of physical work in tropical conditions.

Traditional applications included:

- Supporting energy and endurance for agricultural work
- General comfort and relief from everyday aches
- Digestive wellness support in folk practices
- Use in social settings or local customs within Thai communities

The plant contains natural alkaloids, most notably mitragynine. Traditional knowledge observes that effects can vary with the amount consumed — often described as more invigorating in smaller quantities and more soothing in larger amounts.

Current Status in Thailand

Following its removal from the narcotics list, the cultivation, processing, and trade of kratom in Thailand are now regulated under the Kratom Plant Act B.E. 2565 (2022). This modern legal framework permits responsible plantation development and the production of quality leaves for use in licensed food supplements and herbal products, provided strict quality standards (including minimum mitragynine content and purity testing) are met. Thailand's clear regulations and favourable growing conditions position it as a leading origin for sustainably produced kratom in the expanding regional and international market.

This guide is offered for educational purposes to help visitors, guests, and those interested in traditional Thai plants better understand the cultural heritage and agricultural significance of *Mitragyna speciosa*.

This document is provided for informational and educational purposes only. It does not constitute medical, legal, or professional advice. Always comply with current Thai laws and regulations regarding kratom cultivation and products.