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Comparative Microscopic Characters of *Ginkgo biloba* L. from South America and Asia

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SUMMARY. Ginkgo biloba, **the single species of Ginkgoales, is a deciduous tree displaying bilobe dichotomously veined leaf. It is native to China and cultivated around the world because of its therapeutic relevance. Leaf phytopharmaceutical products are mainly used for treating cognitive deficits and vascular dementia. This work has compared the leaf and stem microscopic characters of different specimens from South America (Curitiba, Brazil) and Asia (Beijing, China and Hiroshima and Tokyo, Japan), aiming to investigate some anatomical variations according to environmental factors. All the specimens from South America and Asia have shown similar characters, except for the amount of phenolic compounds. These bioactive metabolites are visually alike in all the Asian samples and higher comparatively to the South American specimens. These results are useful for the quality control of the raw material and standardization of leaf extracts for phytotherapy.**

KEY WORDS: Ecological anatomy, *Ginkgo biloba,* Maidenhair, Medicinal plant, Pharmacognosy, Plant anatomy.

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