

Goji Berry-Ancient Herb, New Discovery

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If you are not familiar with the Goji berry, you may soon be reading and hearing more about it. This little red berry has been consumed for thousands of years by communities of people throughout Asia. Within the past decade, scientific research has been documenting the constituents of this herb and finding links with numerous health benefits.

As early as the first century A.D., the ancient Asian medical text "Divine Farmer's Handbook of Natural Medicine" (Shen Nong Ben Cao) extolled this berry's medicinal virtues. Some of its health benefits touted today are protection from premature aging; stimulation of hGH (human growth hormone), the "youth hormone"; increase of energy and strength; maintenance of healthy blood pressure, enhancement of sexual function, support of eye health, improvement in memory; and headache relief, to name a few.

There are two primary types of Lycium Goji berries that are used medicinally. One type, grown mainly in China, is the Lycium Chinense, often referred to as Chinese wolfberry, matrimony vine, or Chinese boxthorn. The other is Lycium Barbarum, which grows in various regions of Asia such as Tibet and Inner Mongolia.

The Goji berry has been used in traditional Mongolian and Tibetan medicine for centuries. In Asian herbalism, the Tibetan Goji berry is among the most revered of sexual tonic herbs, used to increase sexual fluids and enhance fertility. In Mongolia, it is commonly used by first trimester mothers to prevent morning sickness.

Archeological evidence dates man back more than 50,000 years in the valleys of the Himalayas. The urban civilization that flourished for nearly 1,500 years in this region was along the trade route between central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Some theorize that the Traditional Himalayan Medicine System (THMS), passed down by word of mouth, was spread along this trade route as well, and that the medical traditions of Tibet and China, and the Ayurvedic system of India have their origins in THMS.

Early Twentieth Century British and European expeditions to the area focused on the Hunzakuts. These people were noted for their strength and endurance, even into old age, with many living healthy for more than 100 years. Recent research into the therapeutic plants used in the Himalayas that might hold the key to the Hunza longevity have focused attention on the Goji berry. Could this ancient berry prove itself to be an important health elixir for modern man?

Some of the scientific research findings reported about the Goji include:

- * Contains 19 amino acids-(six times higher than bee pollen)
- * Contains 21 trace minerals, including germanium, an anti-cancer trace mineral
- * Contains more protein than whole wheat
- * Contains a complete spectrum of antioxidant carotenoids
- * Contains 500 times the amount of Vitamin C by weight than oranges
- * Contains B-complex
- * Contains vitamin E
- * Contains Beta-Sitosterol, an anti-inflammatory agent; also lowers cholesterol and used to treat sexual impotence and prostate enlargement
- * Contains essential fatty acids
- * Contains Cyperone, a sesquiterpene that benefits the heart and blood pressure
- * Contains Solavetivone, an anti-fungal and anti-bacterial compound

Source: Dr Earl Mindell, and Rick Handel, Gojii: The Himalyan Health Secret

Margaret Marchuk is a freelance writer/editor with special interest in natural healing and the arts.