

CAMU-CAMU FROM THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

DESCRIPTION & TRADITIONAL USES:

What if there was an all natural plant source of vitamin C (ascorbic acid) that contained thirty times more vitamin C than an orange and also provided a significant amount of B vitamins, beta-carotene, minerals and amino acids? There is such a fruit and the name is camu-camu (myrcia dubia) often called bayberry fruit. It grows on a small tree that thrives in the lush, enriched soil of the Amazon Rainforest.

Indigenous in Peru and other areas of South America this hardy tree starts life covered by the nutrient rich flood waters of the surrounding rivers four months out of the year. This nutrient dense material nourishes the camu-camu trees providing the plum-sized reddish/purple colored fruit with highest recorded source of vitamin C than any other known plant on the planet.

It takes at least 4-8 years before the tree bears any fruit. However, once it does start producing, it may be harvested 2 or 3 times a year. When the small white flowers of the tree are in bloom, the air is filled with its sweet exquisite aroma. The inner yellowish pulp, however, tastes extremely astringent due to its high ascorbic acid content. Picking the fruit provides a very unique situation as it often times is done from a canoe or boat depending on the flooding of the river and time of year.

Traditionally, the natives steep the flesh of the fruit in hot water and drink as a tea to ward off flu, colds and sore throats. Or they often press the fresh fruit into camu-camu juice for energy and stamina. During harvest season, camu-camu ice cream is very popular in the local markets. So, if you are planning a trip to Peru, you might include a visit to local markets to sample camu-camu in its various forms. Due to the nature of ascorbic acid to start depreciating after picking, drying immediately after harvesting is the most beneficial method of marketing this fruit in order to retain the full vitamin C and other nutritional values.

BENEFITS AND SCIENTIFIC STUDIES:

There are a myriad of clinical studies indicating the accepted benefits of supplementation with camu-camu. However, bear in mind some camu-camu products may be mixed with synthetic vitamin C or ascorbic acid and/or diluted with yucca or maltidextrin. All studies mentioned are with PURE unadulterated plant based non-irradiated camu-camu. Because of its anti-viral, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-depressant, qualities, its uses are not only numerous but diverse.

Obviously most of these benefits are linked to its high vitamin C content plus the high content of bioflavonoid. Interestingly, although much focus has been put on vitamin C, when used alone vitamin C is not effective, it must be accompanied by bioflavonoids. For example scurvy, a weakening of the gum and loss of teeth is a disease associated with

a deficiency in vitamin C. It cannot be cured by synthetic vitamin C. Only natural sources of vitamin C, which also contain natural bioflavonoids, are effective.

Vitamin C is essential for the formation of collagen, a component holding various tissues together. When applied topically, vitamin C and bioflavonoids helps restore and maintain a healthy skin including gum tissue, eyes, nerve and circulatory tissue. By aiding in the prevention of tissue injury and the healing of injured tissue, supplementing with camu-camu promotes collagen formation and works internally literally holding the entire body and all its organs and systems together.

What this means specifically is camu-camu is a superior choice over synthetic vitamin C to support and strengthen the immune system, liver, lungs, lymphatic and urinary systems. Plant based vitamin C such as camu-camu has the additional advantages of being non-irritating to sensitive stomachs and because it is a complete source, one or two grams a day is as effective as five to six grams of synthetic vitamin C.

Even more outstanding is the fact that the camu-camu plant contains in addition to bioflavonoids, significant amount of iron, niacin (vitamin B3), riboflavin (vitamin B2), thiamin (vitamin B1), potassium and essential amino acids leucine and serine.

Therefore, this little fruit from the Amazon Rainforest has a broad range of health promoting properties such as:

- . supports immune function
- . promotes healthy skin, hair, gums and nails
- . assists in managing adrenal gland fatigue
- . enhances memory functions and emotions
- . helpful in reduction of stress, anxiety, and pain
- . aids in anti-aging processes

Camu-Camu is expected to be a major export of Peru in the near future as its amazing properties and availability become more accessible. The growing popularity of this wild rain forest fruit is contributing to the sustainable development of the Amazon River basin helping the natives maintain their traditional ways of life and keeping the rainforest alive and thriving for future generations.

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