

Scripps Miramar Seed Library

“Grow & Share”



Newsletter

OCTOBER 23

SPICES

Spices add flavor to our life and may be a source of well-being for us also.

Spices, earth's refined alchemy, discovered and cherished by our ancestors, enhance the flavor of our food, bringing vitality to our mealtimes. We can use spices not only for their culinary delights but also for their impressive healing qualities to support our health, inner balance, and well-being.

Along with flavor, spices add texture and color to our plate.



Eating a tasty, aromatic, nutritious meal in a pleasant environment nourishes the mind, body and spirit. In the culinary arts, herbs are usually the leafy parts of plants and can be sweet or savory in flavor. Some other parts of the plant such as bark, seed, berries, root etc. are also considered herbs and used for medicinal purposes. Spices are seasonings obtained from bark, root, buds, fruits, flower parts or seeds of plants, used in food for flavor, color or as a preservative. Spices are sometimes used in medicine, religious rituals, cosmetics, or perfume production. For example, vanilla is commonly used as an ingredient in fragrance manufacturing. However, plant-based sweeteners such as sugar are not considered a spice.

India contributes to 75% of global spice production which is reflected culturally through its cuisine. Historically, the spice trade developed throughout the Indian subcontinent as well as in East Asia and the Middle East.

Europe's demand for spices was among the economic and cultural factors that encouraged exploration in the early modern period.

The spice trade developed throughout the Indian subcontinent and Middle East by 2000 BCE with cinnamon and black pepper, and in East Asia with herbs and pepper. The



Egyptians used herbs for cooking as well as in mummification. Their demand for exotic spices and herbs helped stimulate world trade. Cloves were used in Mesopotamia by 1700 BCE with the earliest written records of spices coming from ancient Egyptian, Chinese, and Indian cultures.

Spices for flavor and health

Historically, spices have been used throughout the ages as aromatic flavorings for food. However, more importantly, spices have been used throughout the ages as medicine, to heal the body and extend life. Different spices have different properties and can be used



to warm, cleanse, restore, soothe, boost energy levels, and support the vital body-balancing immune system. Spices are concentrated

full of phytonutrients, which, while not vital to keeping you alive, may help prevent disease when added to your diet. This keeps your body systems at peak efficiency.

There are different types of spices that can keep our body working at its best.

Immune spices-



Immunity is balanced strength, the ultimate support for bodies and minds. Through an astonishing and elaborate program of checks and balances, our immune system strives to keep us healthy and well. There are a handful of spices that not only offer flavor but promote the immune system, our body's power-plant protector. For example, turmeric has a multitude of assets that help to prevent and alleviate the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis and Alzheimer's disease.

Turmeric-The Master Spice- turmeric is the most powerful spice in the pantry. Studies show that it was utilized in Indian medical system Ayurveda, 4000 years ago. Most of the turmeric of the world comes from India. Research has demonstrated promising results for turmeric as an antioxidant and antiseptic with anti-inflammatory plus analgesic benefits.



Other immune spices are **garlic, rosemary, fenugreek, wasabi and cumin**, which is also being studied as a hormone balancer.

Cleansing spice

The body's versatile and natural detoxification or cleansing system has evolved over millennia to adjust to the increasingly hostile sphere we exist upon: Earth. These cleansing spices show promising ability to provide support to our natural detoxification systems, helping to cleanse the body and clear the mind. Spices abound with plentiful antioxidants, the most powerful fend off free radicals and aid in flushing out toxins. Bay leaf, brimming with nutrients, including vitamin C, reduces oxidation and LDL cholesterol. Hibiscus on the other hand, aids in cleaning and clearing the digestive system.

Cinnamon- The Good Sweet spice-



Loaded with powerful anti-inflammatory polyphenols, cinnamon is thought to lower blood pressure and blood sugar. It is also thought to have skin tightening and wound-healing properties. *Cinnamomum verum*, which translates

from Latin as "true cinnamon", is native to India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar. It was imported to Egypt as early as 2000 BC.

Other Cleansing spices- **pomegranate, coriander, sage, thyme**

Energy Spice-

Energy is essential to life. All our metabolic processes and physical movements depend on it. A big boost of these spices can spark the body to strengthen and optimize our inherent stores of energy, whether for aiding digestion, increasing quality brain activity or stepping up physical exertion.



Tamarind-The Sweet-Tart Spice

The huge evergreen tamarind tree, native to tropical Africa, is prized for its edible pod-like inside. Its name is derived from the Arabic for "Date of India". The pods are peeled open, revealing the seeds surrounded by the sour-prune-like pulp. The pulp can be compressed into a brick, but it is also available as a

concentrate or powder. It is also utilized in numerous dishes of Malaysian, Indian, Thai, Indonesian and central and south American cuisines.



Tamarind contains a wealth of B-vitamins, especially thiamine for energy and strength, bone-building minerals, energy-rich potassium and vitamin K. Its traditional health benefits include relief for dry eyes and other optical conditions.

Other Energy Spices- **cinnamon, clove, star anise, mint, horseradish.**

Warming spices-

When there's a chill in the air, these spices will provide you with a healthy glow from their alleged ability to increase circulation, open pores and sinuses plus stimulate the body's defense mechanisms to stave off chills, aches, pains and disease. Ginger is spicy, sweet, can clear brain-fog and improve circulation as it warms the body



Horseradish- The Antibiotic Spice-

It has been grown in English fields since the 15th century. It has nothing to do with either horses or radishes, but a great deal to do with food and medicine. It has a compound called allyl isothiocyanate, which is a natural and powerful antibiotic. Loaded with healing phytochemicals, it contains an abundance of energetic compounds which have been tested to aid the lungs, digestion, joints and muscles as well the immune



system. Horseradish is a circulatory-system star, a super antiseptic and a strong decongestant that aids in open blocked respiratory passages.

Other warming spices- **Garlic, Cumin, Black Peppercorn. Fenugreek.**

Restorative Spice-

When you are challenged with an overabundance of decisions to make and other stressors in your daily life, restorative spices in a smoothie, dinner dish or a simple cup will help your body reboot, restoring health, radiance, strength and balance. Garlic works to repel colds, flu and other inflammatory diseases. Cardamom's tiny seeds are packed with antibacterial, antioxidant and antiseptic power. Fenugreek restores and rebalances blood sugar with its active bio-identical compound diosgenin, which helps to restore insulin and triglyceride levels.

Pomegranate - The Hippocratic Spice-



This jeweled "fruit of paradise" originated in Persia and the Persian word is aptly translated. Pomegranate seeds are beneficial for skin and eye inflammation, as well as to aid digestion and cleanse the blood. In ancient cultures, the pomegranate

has been a symbol of health, luck, fertility and immortality. "May food be your medicine and medicine be your food". This famous quotation is attributed to Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine. He was no doubt thinking of pomegranate seeds.

Restorative Spices - **lemongrass, Hibiscus, Saffron, garlic, Fenugreek.**

Calming spice

The chaos and busyness of today's world, which is often stressful, switches on our "fight-or-flight" hormone, cortisol. To avoid this, we need a pocket of peace to reorganize our thoughts and rebalance our life. These spices contain an abundance of phytonutrients that may help to soothe the

body and calm the mind. Lemongrass can calm the nerves and refocus scattered thoughts and worries. Sage is being studied for its mind-calming, meditative and thought-focusing properties. Mint offers relief for nerve pain, quiets the mind and calms anxiety.

Saffron- The Seductive spice- The most expensive spice in the world is the dried bright-yellow stigma from a small purple crocus. Saffron has been used since ancient times to treat a variety of ills, including depression, anxiety, hormonal imbalance and other disorders in men and women. Bountiful in minerals and vitamins, especially potassium and vitamin C, saffron is also considered helpful in lowering blood pressure, calming the heartbeat and easing digestion.



Other calming spices- **Nutmeg, Rosemary, Citrus Zest, Ginger**

SEED LIBRARY PICK -RECIPE- Tropical

Turmeric Smoothie

Ingredients-

Pineapple 3 oz

Fresh or frozen mango 4oz

Strip orange peel 1x2 inch

Turmeric root 2inch piece or ¼ tsp ground turmeric

Cracked black pepper

¼ tsp cardamom seeds

Fresh lime juice 1 tbsp

Coconut milk 1 cup (can make into ice cubes)

Ice cubes 4-6

Chia seeds 1 tsp

Put all the ingredients except the chia seeds into a high-speed blender-juicer and blend until smooth. Sprinkle chia seeds on top and serve.



SEED LIBRARY PLANT PICK- Sage

Is an aromatic herb of the mint family cultivated for its pungent edible leaves. Sage is native to the Mediterranean region and is used either fresh or dried as a flavoring in many foods, particularly in stuffings for poultry, pork and in sausages. Sage is a perennial plant that grows about 60 cm (2 feet) tall. The oval leaves are rough or wrinkled and usually downy; the color ranges from gray-green to whitish green, and some varieties are variegated. In medieval Europe, sage was thought to strengthen the memory and promote wisdom.



SEED LIBRARY BOOK SUGGESTION-Spice Health Heroes

Many spices have huge benefits for health and nutrition that are only now beginning to be recognized in the Western world. This book explores the nutritional and medical applications of 30 commonly extraordinary spices.

Call no. 641.6383/MACALLER



From your Garden



Garden Events @ Scripps Ranch Library

The library has several events going in October month if you are interested.



Oct 21st Earth Friendly Gardening 10-11 am

Garden Share- 11 –1 pm

Oct 24th Scripps Mesa Garden Club 5:30-7:30pm

References:

MacAller, Natasha (2016) "Spice Health Heroes". Published by Jacqui Small, LLC

There are multiple resources available at Scripps Ranch Library that are not cited here. We request that you share pictures of your garden and tells us about your experiences, which can be helpful for other gardeners. Also, we invite you to send in your garden related questions and we will answer them in the next newsletter.

This newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis from this current issue. The next newsletter will appear in January, 2024.

This newsletter is composed by Ashu Agarwal and edited by Jeff Lash

For any questions, please contact Ashu Agarwal (seedlibrary@srfol.org)

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