

Welcome to the  
Herb Growers  
Network of WA



Herb of the  
Month:  
Sarsaparilla

## Network News

Hi All,  
I hope the warmer weather is treating you well, we have been having some very warm days up here on the farm.  
I have been having a few dramas. Someone has hacked into the herbgrowers website and it has crashed. Not great for business, if anyone know anyone who can help get it up and running it would be greatly appreciated.  
I am also on the look out for someone who deals in the mar-

keting of health and healing. If you know anyone, please send them my way.

On the herb front I have started making Marsala Chai again, it was interesting to start with as the problems in India has led to a world shortage of cardamom. I have managed to source some and chai is a going and happening tea.

Enjoy your month,  
Louise Plant



## Interesting Facts to Consider

- Officials in the UK have admitted that the meat from the offspring of a clones cow is now in the British food chain. This meat will have been eaten, though meat from another cloned offspring has been prevented from reaching the food chain by the FDA.
- A study has shown that children who survive cancer are at a higher risk of cancer later in life or may die early of other causes.
- There has been a link between gum disease and heart disease. UK and Irish experts believe that bacteria from the gums is able to enter the bloodstream via the gums and they deposit a clot-forming protein. More reasons to have healthy gums!
- Chemicals used to make non-stick coatings on cookware and waterproof fabrics may raise levels of cholesterol according to US researchers.
- Fluoride in drinking water damages our teeth - as well as our brain, kidney, thyroid function and hormonal balance, leading scientists have told a European Union public hearing. The UK and Ireland are the only two nations in the EU that fluoridate the public water supply
- If you leave bananas connected to the stem they ripen faster.
- Capsicums with 3 bumps on the bottom are sweeter and better for eating. 4 bumps they are better for cooking
- Use wet cotton buds or wool to pick up broken glass you can't see

### QUALITY HERBS Given with WISDOM

Do you know where you are able to find quality herbs?

Do you know where you can find information and traditional uses of herbs?

- The Herb Growers Network of WA, offers Quality Herbs with Wisdom.

## Article

# CHIA SEEDS



*Organic Green Teas  
with a hint of herbs*

I have started eating chia for breakfast and am feeling great benefits from it from my energy levels and from my bowel actions. This has spurred me to find out more about chia seeds and I wished to share my findings with you.

Chia seeds come from the same family as sage and its botanical name is *Salvia hispanica*. It is indigenous to Mexico and Guatemala where it was cultivated by the Aztecs and is still used today. It was believed to have been the third most abundant crop to the Aztecs behind maize and beans. Priests were often paid in chia seeds.

The word chia comes from the Nahuatl word meaning oily because of the great oils that it contains.

It is an annual herb and it is now grown in many areas of the USA. Many of the species grown are actually *Salvia lavandulifolia*. In 2008 Australia was the world's largest producer of chia.

The seeds are found in a number of different colours. They can be a mottled brown, black and white colour.

The seed is very high in Omega 3 fatty acids and the seeds will yield 25-30% of oil which is extractable and is mostly alpha linolenic acid.

The seeds are also a great source of antioxidants and contain a variety of amino acids. They have 20% protein, 34% oil, 25% fibre and antioxidants such as chlorogenic and caffeic acids, myricetin, quercetin and kaempferol flavonoids.

There are many health benefits to be had from eating chia seeds.

Three teaspoons a day will help to provide you with

- High levels of ALA Omega 3 oils
- Replenishing levels of antioxidants to work against free radical damage, equal to blueberries.
- Great sources of fibre which will help with weight maintenance regimes

- Fibre to reduce risks of cardiovascular disease, colon cancer and diabetes
- A complete protein
- A thermogenic aid which acts to boost your metabolic rate
- Providing your omega 3 and Omega 6 needs in a ratio of 3:1. Chia is one food with the highest omega 3 levels.
- A source of food which is rarely sprayed with pesticides as insects never bother it.
- A gluten free alternative

It is known that the darker seed contains quercetin, unlike the white seed. This is a well known fact that darker foods contain more antioxidants than lighter foods.

Chia would be a food that comes under the nutrient dense heading of foods. Its nutritional profile is really quite unmatched.

One of the primary benefits of chia seeds is their high concentration of essential fatty acids (EFAs), which are up to four times the concentration of other grains. EFAs are important for the respiration of vital organs, yet the human body is unable to manufacture them itself; they must be obtained through diet.

Chia is also touted as having the highest omega-3 content of any plant-based source, containing 64 percent alpha linolenic acid (ALA). Flax, another popular source of ALA, contains 55 percent. The omega-3 to omega-6 ratio is also highly auspicious in chia, representing a healthy balance of 3:2.

Chia is high in complete protein, containing about 23 percent protein per seed. All essential amino acids are present and appropriately balanced within the protein, making it complete and nutritious in and of itself. Packed with essential vitamins and trace minerals, chia is a phenomenal whole food for any diet.



*Our Lumina Tea  
for stress*

Chia seeds have an amazingly long shelf life when stored in their natural, dry state. Unlike flax seeds which have a highly impenetrable outer shell, requiring them to be ground into a meal that can turn rancid rather quickly, chia seeds can be stored and eaten just as they are for their full benefits.

All in all, chia seeds are a wonderful, whole superfood that is great for a variety of creative uses. Since they have no flavour of their own and actually perpetuate the flavours of the foods with which they are combined, the uses for chia are limitless.

One ounce of chia seeds contains 137 calories, four grams of protein and 11 grams of fiber in addition to omega-3s.

High in fiber, chia is known for its easy digestibility. Its layer is a strong source of mucillois soluble fiber which aids in maintaining healthy digestion and assimilation of nutrients. Absorbing more than seven times its weight when placed in water, chia seeds form a gel that, when eaten, produces a physical barrier between carbohydrates and digestive enzymes in the stomach. This process effectively slows the rate at which carbohydrates are converted into blood sugar, rendering chia a great addition to a diabetic diet.

Chia consumption contributes to maintaining balanced hydration and electrolyte levels within the body, steadying water intake, assimilation, and absorption.

There are many ways of eating chia. They can be soaked and eaten like porridge, which is how I have been eating them, blended up with organic bananas.

Here are some recipes from "Cooking With Chia," by Gloria Hoover:

#### **Chia Blueberry Pancakes** (Makes 4 pancakes)

*Ingredients:*

- 1 1/2 cups of a dry pancake mix
- 1/2 cup chia seeds
- 1 cup skim milk or rice, nut milk
- 2 eggs or egg substitute
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

*Directions:*

Mix the chia seeds with the milk of choice and let set about 5 minutes. In a medium size mixing bowl add the pancake mix. In a separate bowl or large measuring cup whisk the eggs or egg substitute with the chia milk mixture. Pour the liquid into the bowl with the pancake mix and stir until just moistened or combined. While mixing set a nonstick skillet or griddle over medium heat, spray with a light coating of vegetable oil.

When the skillet is hot, spoon 1/4 cups of batter onto the skillet. Sprinkle with as many blueberries as desired. Cook until bubbles form on the surface, flip and cook until browned on the other side.

#### **Chia Cheese Enchiladas**

(Serves 4)

*Ingredients:*

- 8 ounces shredded cheese (Mexican blend or cheddar)
- 6 green onions chopped into 1/4 pieces -green and white parts
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 8 ounces of cream cheese at room temperature
- 8 enchilada size tortillas (corn or flour)
- 1 10 ounce can enchilada sauce
- 8 tablespoons chia seeds

*Directions:*

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray a 9X13 inch baking dish with vegetable spray. Reserve about 4 ounces of the shredded cheese for the topping. In a medium bowl, combine the remaining cheese, onions, cumin, chia seeds. Spread the softening cream cheese equally on the tortilla, top with the onion/chia mixture. Roll the tortillas and place seam side down in the baking dish.

Pour the enchilada sauce over the top of tortillas, sprinkle the remaining cheese over the top of the sauce. Bake about 15 to 20 minutes until golden brown and bubbly.

Coconut Water can be injected intravenously in an emergency



*Celestial Herb Teas*



## *Herb of the Month— Sarsaparilla*

### **Name: Sarsaparilla**

**Botanic Name –** *Smilax officinalis*

**Family** Liliaceae

**Other Names** - Red beared sarsaparilla, salsaparilla, khao yen, saparna, smilace, smilax, jupicanga

**Parts Used:** The root and rhizome are used and can be harvested all year round

**History:** Sarsaparilla has been used traditionally to treat syphilis and glandular imbalance. The name *sarsaparilla* or *zarzaparilla* comes from the Spanish word *zarza* (bramble or bush), *parra* (vine), and *illa* (small)—a small, brambled vine. Sarsaparilla root has been used for centuries by the indigenous peoples of Central and South America for sexual impotence, rheumatism, skin ailments, and as a general tonic for physical weakness. It has long been used by tribes in Peru and Honduras for headaches and joint pain, and against the common cold. Many shamans and medicine men in the Amazon use sarsaparilla root internally and externally for leprosy and other skin problems

**Habitat:** It is native to South America, Jamaica, the Caribbean, Mexico, Honduras, and the West Indies.

**Description** - A perennial vine Sarsaparilla is a brambled, woody vine that grows up to 50 m long, with paired tendrils for climbing (often high into the rainforest canopy). It produces small flowers and black, blue, or red berry-like fruits which are eaten greedily by birds. *Smilax*, a member of the lily family, is native to tropical and temperate parts of the world and comprises about 350 species worldwide

**Cultivation**— The stems of many *Smilax* species are covered with prickles and, sometimes, these vines are cultivated to form impenetrable thickets (which are called *catbriers* or *greenbriers*). The root, used for medicinal purposes, is long and tuberous—spreading 6–8 feet—and is odorless and fairly tasteless. Many species of *Smilax* around the world share the name *sarsaparilla*; these are very similar in appearance, uses, and even chemical structure.

**Active Compounds** - Saponins based on the aglycones sarsapogenin, sarsaparilloside and smilagenin. Fibrosterol, stigmasterol and their glucosides. calcium copper, iron, iodine, silicon, manganese, potassium, sodium, sulphur, Vitamins A, C, D and B complex.

### **Actions**

- Alterative
- Anti-rheumatic
- Diaphoretic
- Hypo-tensive
- Diuretic
- Detox agent
- Anodyne
- Hepatic

### **Indications**—

Because of sarsaparilla's blood cleaning action, it makes it a valuable tool for rheumatic and skin conditions. It has been found to be particularly useful for 'scaly' skin conditions such as psoriasis which are very irritated. Its other blood cleaning actions help to purify the blood, cleanse the colon and the urinary system. It is in this way that it treats skin conditions as well as having the benefit of lowering blood pressure. The cleaned blood will allow circulation to be increased in the joints and therefore reduce inflammation and arthritic pains.



Clinical research has validated the traditional use of sarsaparilla for skin conditions such as psoriasis, eczema, acne, and leprosy. In 1942, it was reported in the New England Journal of Medicine to improve the condition of psoriasis dramatically. There the results of a clinical study with 92 patients was detailed which reported that it improved psoriasis lesions in 62% of cases and completely cleared lesions in 18% of cases.

Sarsaparilla has been marketed (fraudulently) to contain testosterone and/or other anabolic steroids. While it is a rich source of natural plant steroids and saponins, it never has been proven to have any anabolic effects, nor has testosterone been found in sarsaparilla or any other plant source thus far.

Flavonoids in sarsaparilla have been documented to have immune modulation and liver protective activities. A U.S. patent was awarded in 2003 describing these flavonoids to be effective in treating autoimmune diseases and inflammatory reactions through their immunomodulating effects.

Sarsasapogenin and smilagenin were subjects of a 2001 U.S. patent which reported that these Smilax steroids had the ability to treat senile dementia, cognitive dysfunction, and Alzheimer's disease. In the patent's animal studies references, smilagenin reversed the decline of brain receptors in aged mice and restored the receptor levels to those observed in young animals, reversed the decline in cognitive function, and enhanced memory and learning.

Sarsaparilla is used all over the world for a wide range of symptoms. These include lung and stomach congestion, skin diseases, herpes, syphilis, psoriasis, arthritis, rheumatism, gout, nervous disorders, epilepsy, chronic liver disorders, colds fevers, and stomach and intestinal gas. It helps promote good circulation, clear toxins, balance the glandular system, and stimulate metabolism and male sexual potency. The natural steroidal glycosides found in smilax make it a favorite for body builders and anyone who would like to be stronger and energized. It promotes rejuvenation and can be used as an anti-inflammatory

For treating psoriasis it combines well with burdock, yellow, dock and cleavers.

**Properties/Actions Documented by Research:**

anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal, antimutagenic (cellular protector), blood cleanser, detoxifier, diuretic, hepatoprotective (liver protector), immunomodulator (selectively reduces overactive immune cells), neuroprotective (protects brain cells)

**Other Properties/Actions Documented by Traditional Use:**

absorption aid, analgesic (pain-reliever), anticancerous, antioxidant, antirheumatic, antiseptic, aphrodisiac, diaphoretic (promotes sweating), digestive stimulant, febrifuge (reduces fever), stimulant, tonic (tones, balances, strengthens), wound healer

**Dosage** - Tincture 2-3 ml twice daily, root 1-2g twice daily, decoction 1/2 to 1 cup 2/3 times daily

**Traditional Preparation:** One-half to 1 cup of a standard root decoction 2-3 times daily. Alternatively, 1-2 grams of root powder in tablets or capsules twice daily or 2-3 ml of a standard tincture or fluid extract may be taken twice daily.

**Safety** - : Sarsaparilla may increase the absorption of some drugs and compounds. Some report that it can increase the absorption of Digitalis glycosides while accelerating the elimination of hypnotic drugs. Large doses may cause gastric upset.

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