



Boost The Immune System And More With Gac Fruit

Most people have never heard of gac fruit, yet it is very popular in South East Asia, particularly in China and Vietnam. The fruit is grown on vines that reach the size of a cantaloupe and from North East Australia across to China and Vietnam it is used as both a food and a medicine. It is only fairly recently that it has found use in the West as a health food

So what's so special about this fruit, known also as baby jackfruit and sweet gourd? Its bright red color should provide a clue, since it is jam packed full of beta carotene, lycopene and other strong antioxidants that not only helps to support the immune system, but also helps to retard the effects of aging. It has been used in Vietnam in particular to overcome the effects of an endemic deficiency in vitamin A, and is rich in provitamin A carotenoids. It is also widely used in Chinese medicine to treat a variety of complaints.

Antioxidants and Free Radicals

Antioxidants can boost health in a number of ways, and it might help you understand better the benefits that gac fruit can provide to explain what antioxidants do and why they are such an essential part of our diets. Every millisecond of every day of our lives, our natural metabolism of the conversion of blood glucose to energy generates small oxygenated molecules known as free radicals.

Free radicals are molecules that possess an unpaired electron and are highly unstable. Electrons generally travel in pairs, and when one of that pair is lost through a chemical reaction, the other electron has only one purpose in its short life: to pair up with another electron and it will do whatever it has to in order to achieve that. It is called a free radical, and its life is short. Free radicals destroy body cells, and this can have a dramatic effect, both visually on your skin, and internally on your general health.

Apart from those generated by your body's own biochemistry, free radicals are present in car emissions and other pollutants such as pesticides, smog and fried and barbecued foods. They are also formed in your skin by excessive exposure to the UV component of the sun's radiation. That is why the skin of those living in hot climates tends to age earlier.

Free radicals are what make you look older as you grow older: they destroy skin cells as they are formed, but that is one of the least of their effects. They can also oxidize low density lipids (LDL) that carry cholesterol around your body, causing it to deposit fatty



plaques on the walls of your arteries, which is a serious cardiovascular condition known as atherosclerosis.

Antioxidants can donate an electron to free radicals without then becoming free radicals themselves, and so destroy them as they are formed. However, the antioxidant can then lose its reducing power. Free radicals do not roam the blood seeking victims as many imagine them to, but react almost instantly, as soon as they are formed. It is important, therefore, that antioxidants are present in or close to every cell of your body. To achieve this, they must be bound to a fatty molecule, and the problem with many phytonutrients is that they have no associated fats or oils to carry them into the fatty tissues of the body.

Nutritional Constituents of Gac Fruit

Not so with gac fruit, because in addition to the beta carotene and lycopene content, it is also rich in long-chain fatty acids, particularly linoleic and alpha linoleic acids. Not only that, but its beta carotene content is around ten times that of carrots, and it contains 70 times the lycopene of tomatoes! Vitamin C is another very powerful antioxidant, and gac contains 60 times the Vitamin C of oranges. It is also rich in other free radical busters, such as xeaxanthins and alpha-tocopherol, a form of vitamin E.

Altogether, gac fruit contains a free radical killing arsenal that should be enough to scare even the most courageous free radical back to where it came from. Other constituents of gac are numerous minerals, particularly zinc and iron.

That is why the sweet gourd is such a prized fruit, and why Southeast Asian women have skins that western women of the same age would die for! Antioxidants help to prevent the disruption and destruction of skin cells that are the major reason for aging looks, and why skin creams are packed with vitamins A and E, both strong antioxidants.

Health Benefits of Gac

Most of the health benefits of gac are provided by its antioxidant properties. Thus, if you have a high cholesterol level, gac can help you to avoid atherosclerosis by preventing the oxidation of the LDL cholesterol, which is the precursor to it depositing on your artery walls. The body needs cholesterol, but levels should be kept to within certain limits or the resultant atherosclerosis can narrow your arteries leading to cardiac problems and strokes, particularly in the very narrow arteries of the brain.

Gac also supports the immune system and helps to maintain prostate health, largely through its alpha tocopherol, or vitamin E content. Vitamin E is easily destroyed by free radicals, which is where the beta carotene is of benefit. This is the body's first line of



defense against free radicals, and each molecule can neutralize up to 20 free radical molecules before it is destroyed. This helps to save other antioxidants such as vitamin E.

Lycopene is particularly beneficial to the prostate and current research indicates that it can help to prevent prostate cancer and cardiovascular disease, plus some other diseases such as macular degeneration that affects your sight. Perhaps this is one reason why the gac fruit membranes are used in Vietnam to promote healthy vision, and they also help to cure dry eyes. Lycopene remains in your body fat longer than normal beta carotene, and recent studies have found that men with high amounts of lycopene in their body fat are up to 50% less likely to suffer heart attacks as those with low amounts.

Gac fruit is jam-packed full of nutrients and antioxidants, and has no known side effects. It is used in Asia for weddings and other special occasions, and is grown on lattices in many gardens, although it has a short season. However, gac fruit is not known as the “Fruit from Heaven” for no reason, and if you were allowed the choice of only one fruit in your life, then this would be the one.



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