

Maqui Berry and Powder Profile

Also known as

Aristotelia chilensis, *Cornus Chilensis*, *Aristotelia glandulosa*, maqui berry, Chilean Wineberry; also known locally as maquei, queldrón, ach, koelon, and clon.

Introduction

An evergreen shrub or small tree belonging to the Elaeocarpaceae family and native to the temperate rainforests of Chile and Argentina, the Maqui has smooth bark, reaches about 3-4 meters in height, and bears small star-shaped yellowish-green flowers that produce edible purple-black berries much favored by birds. Chilean Wineberry has been cultivated in England since the 1700s, and was cultivated sparingly in the United States by the early 1900s. In 1844 the French botanist Claude Grey documented that Maqui berries were widely consumed by the Mapuche natives as a tonic to improve stamina and strength, and also to prepare chicha, a low-alcohol fermented drink. The berries, which taste like tart huckleberries, can also be used to make jam or eaten raw, and are extremely rich in antioxidant and anthocyanin properties. The glossy dark green leaves of the tree were used for wound dressings or to prepare an infusion to soothe sore throats, and the bark was peeled to make strings for musical instruments. A good source of vitamin C and potassium, Maqui berries may help maintain healthy levels of cholesterol and triglycerides, support the cardiovascular system by encouraging blood flow, and may strengthen the immune system, as well as increasing bone and joint health (and reducing joint inflammation).

Constituents

Polyphenols, anthocyanins, delphinidin, malvidin, petunidin, cumarins, triterpenes, flavonoids, phenolic antioxidants

Parts Used

The whole berries, dried at low temperatures.

Typical Preparations

As a tea, or mixed into yogurt, a smoothie, or an energy bar.

Summary

Maqui berries are relatively new to the American herbal market, and are primarily being sold as one of the latest "superfoods," with anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anti-aging, anti-cancer, and natural COX-2 inhibiting properties. Maqui berries have reportedly been used by the Mapuche natives of Chile and Argentina for centuries, and may also be useful in detoxification and weight loss efforts.

Precautions

None known.