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ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Health Beneficial Properties of Amaranthus

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Amaranth's are plants of genus *Amaranthus* ("Amaranthaceae| plant family"). It is a cosmopolitan genus of annual or short lived perennial plants. There are approximately 60 species that are annuals with small seeds (approximately 0.07 grams per 100 seeds). It is cultivated as a minor crop in Central and South America and some areas of Asia and Africa. Amaranth is a pseudocereal crop and produces cereal-like grains that contain high levels of protein, starch and other vitamins and minerals.

CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom – Plantae

Division – Magnoliophyta

Class – Magnoliopsida

Order – Caryophyllales

Family – Amaranthaceae

Genus – Amaranthus

VEGETABLE AMARANTH: *Amaranthus* species have edible leaves, and several species (*A. blitum* L.; sin. *A. lividus* L., *A. viridis* L.; sin. *A. gracilis* Desf. and *A. tricolor* L.; sin. *A. gangeticus* L.) are already widely used as potherbs (boiled greens). Their mild spinach-like flavour, high yields, ability to grow in hot weather, and high nutritive value have made them popular vegetable crops.

GRAIN AMARANTH: It belongs to a group of cereal-like grain crops or pseudocereals.

The three principal species for grain include:

Amaranthus hypochondriacus L. (sin. *A. leucocarpus* S. Watts, *A. frumentaceus*) - prince's feather; *A. cruentus* L. sin. *A. paniculatus* L. - bush greens, red amaranth *A. caudatus* L. of

two subspecies: subsp. *caudatus*; and subsp. *Mantegazzianus* Passerini syn.: *A. edulis* Spagazzini.

It provides medicinal benefits that include decreasing plasma cholesterol levels, antitumor activity, lowering blood glucose levels and treating anemia. Amaranth has been attracting worldwide attention as a high-potential new crop with different uses.

NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS

Proteins-Amaranthus contain high amount of proteins usually 13.56g that reduce insulin in the blood.

Fiber- It contains dietary fibre usually 6.7g that helps lower cholesterol and improves digestion.

Starch- It contains 57.27 gram of starch. The starch extracted from amaranthus is used in food industries for making edible coating and used as thickeners.

Vitamins and Minerals-Amaranthus is an excellent source of several vitamins and minerals such as:

Vitamin E: Amaranthus contain 1.19 mg of vitamin E that has high antioxidant property and plays an important role against oxidation of fats.

Iron: It contains 7.61 mg of iron that is used to reduce the risk of birth defects and anemia.

Vitamin B₁ and B₂: Vitamins play an essential role in metabolism by converting nutrients into energy and also act as an antioxidant.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF AMARANTHUS

Amaranths have been widely consumed due to its various health benefits and appreciated flavor and medicinal attributes.

Antioxidant Activity

Amaranths leaf extract contain antioxidants that act as free radical scavengers.

Reduces Bad cholesterol

Amaranths leaves lower the bad cholesterol which is responsible for many cardiac problems.

Boost immune system

Amaranths contains important vitamins that helps to bolster our immune system.

Good cardiac health

The leaves of amaranths are full of potassium that is needed for good cardiac health and is necessary for creating a balanced cellular fluid environment.

Weight management and satiety

Amaranth is a protein rich diet that suppress hunger and further help in weight loss.

Improve bone health

Amaranths leaves are rich in calcium which help to prevent osteoporosis and help in strengthening of bones.

Digestive health

Amaranth is a gluten free substance that is use for people suffering from celiac disease.

CONCLUSION

Amaranthus can be used as a healthy food that can be typically used to maintain or improve human health and can be incorporated in different products to improve flavor and colour.

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