Noni (Morinda citrifolia) is an evergreen tree that grows between 10 and 20 feet tall and is often found near lava flows in the islands of the South Pacific. It is also seen in Australia, Southeast Asia (where it is known as Yor) and India (where it is called Indian mulberry).¹

The noni fruit is oval and approximately 5 cm in diameter. It is picked green; when it begins to ripen, the color lightens to a pale yellow with an odor that is very foul-smelling. It has a long history in folk medicine and has been used as a remedy for a number of conditions throughout the South Pacific, Southeast Asia and in parts of Australia and India.

**Nutrient Content**

Chemical analysis reveals that noni is high in vitamins C, B1, B2, B3, B12, and the minerals iron and selenium. It has moderate amounts of potassium and calcium with trace amounts of around 10 other vitamins and minerals. There have been more than 125 phytochemicals identified in noni, including plant sterols, flavonoids, saponins, alkaloids and anthraquinones.² Noni also contains an alkaloid precursor to xeronine, which has been named proxeronine. Many marketers state this is the key active ingredient, call it a biological modifier and claim it has the ability to alter the structure of proteins. Independent scientific validation of these claims has yet to be confirmed in the peer-reviewed literature. What has been confirmed is that in addition to vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals, noni contains amino acids, fatty acids and sugars. There is a wide variety of nutrient levels in various noni products.³

**Health Claims**

Noni’s ability to treat arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, menstrual problems, colds, flu, headaches, broken bones, lacerations, bruises, visual problems, depression, ulcers, cancer and AIDS has been touted on various Web sites, but the only published data on specific conditions in humans is two papers citing case studies linking noni juice intake to liver toxicity.⁴⁵ This is strongly contested by the marketers of noni, many of whom also use it themselves. I found the following survey from one noni juice Web site.⁶
A Survey of Noni Users

91% Increased energy
89% Reduced pain
89% Improved digestion
87% Lowered blood pressure
85% Reduced allergy symptoms
83% Improved diabetes
80% Reduced arthritis symptoms
80% Reduced heart problems
77% Reduced depression symptoms
72% Improved weight loss

Dosing

The typical therapeutic dose is 2 tablespoons (1 ounce), twice daily, 30 minutes before a meal.

Comment

Like the other cure-all juices we discussed last month, there is a need for studies beyond rodents and cell cultures to determine both the actual nutrient profile and what it can and cannot do for various human disorders. I urge the industry to validate claims (like those in the survey) under controlled conditions.

References


Click here for more information about G. Douglas Andersen, DC, DACBSP, CCN.