

The Wolfberry

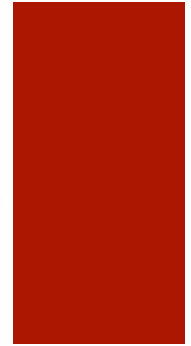


Lycium barbarum
Lycium chinense

Solanaceae

Topics:

- The plant
- Legends
- Traditional Chinese Medicinals
- *Lycium barbarum* health benefits
- Miscellaneous Facts



Other names for Wolfberry:

- Goji berry
- Duke of Agryll's Tea Tree
- Matrimony Vine
- Red Diamonds
- Fructus Lycii

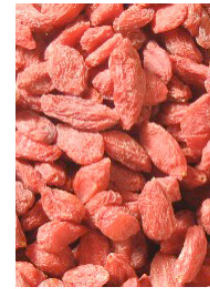
The plant

- 1-3 meters high
- Dense, perennial woody shrub
- Small bright red-orange berries
- Thorny stems
- White-purple flowers
- Can withstand temperatures from -15°F to 100°F
- Edible parts: berries (fresh or dried), leaves, root bark
- ORIGIN: Ningxia Province, China (near the Yellow River)

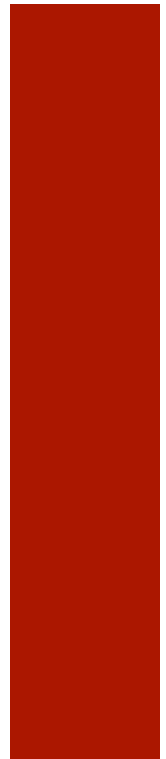
GOJI BERRIES



FRESH



DRIED



Legend of the Wolfberry



*The Well of Youthful Living
a cool well beside the monk's
house, a clear spring feeds
the well and the water
has great powers, emerald
green leaves grow on
the wall, the deep red berries
shine like copper, the flourishing
branch like a walking stick,
the old root in a dog's shape
signals good fortune, the goji
nourishes body and spirit,
drink of the well and
enjoy a long life
- Tang Dynasty poet
Liu Yuxi (722-842 AD)*

- A young woman is whipping an old man by the roadside. When asked what she is doing she replies, “I am punishing my great-great-grandson.”
- “In spring, take its leaves, known as ‘essence of heaven,’ ...In the summer its flowers, known as ‘longevity of life.’ In the autumn, its fruits, known as ‘goji berry.’ In the winter, the bark of its roots, known as ‘the skin and bone of the earth’.
- The berry is connected to:
 - Emperor Shen Nung of Chinese legend, known as the father of Chinese agriculture and medicine.
 - The mythological Chinese herbal master Li Qing Yuen, who was remembered for eating Wolfberries berries everyday.

Lycium barbarum:

- Main medicinal component: POLYSACCHARIDES
- At least 6 vitamin, 11 minerals, 18 amino acids, and countless phytochemicals
- Four main health benefit
 - Antioxidant
 - Immune boost
 - Anti-aging properties
 - Neuromodulation



Traditional Chinese Medicinals

- Berries are often cooked in soups and stews as a functional food to strengthen the body
- Root infusions have been used to lower blood pressure and treat fevers
- Used for liver problems and eyesight improvement



Miscellaneous/Fun Facts:

- The Wolfberry is commonly used as a natural form of erosion control in China
- *L. barbarum* is being researched for Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases
- *L. chinense* has shown evidence of growth-inducing effects on probiotic cells
- Wolfberries are celebrated each August in Ningxia during an annual festival coinciding with the yearly berry harvest
- Theory of how *L. barbarum* came to bear so many nutrients:
 - Yellow River silty, mineral-rich loess leftover from the last glaciation period.
- Because of all the health benefits of the wolfberry, it is considered a “superfood”!



Los Angeles Times

Monday July 18, 2005

latimes.com/health



ERIC BOYD/LOS ANGELES TIMES

BERRY BOUNTY: The berries of the lycium tree can be eaten fresh or dried, above, or made into a tea.

SUPPLEMENTS

Lycium may repress some cancer cells

Tibetan and Chinese legends tell of people who lived century-long lives while retaining the strength and beauty of youth — thanks to lycium. The sweet, red berries of the *Lycium barbarum* tree are rich in beta carotene, B vitamins, vitamin C and several essential minerals. Lycium — sometimes called matrimony vine, wolfberry, boxthorn and goji — is native to Asia. — ELENA CONIB

Uses: Traditional Chinese herbalists recommend lycium to promote liver and kidney health, improve vision and stamina, boost immunity and fertility, combat disease and increase life span. It's also used to prevent morning sickness during pregnancy.

Dose: In traditional Chinese medicine, lycium is most often taken in combination with other herbs, such as schizandra or fennel. The berries can be eaten raw (fresh or dried), or made into a tea. Herbalists recommend half a cup of tea per day, made from about 10

grams of fruit.

Precautions: Some evidence suggests lycium may amplify the effects of blood-thinning drugs, such as warfarin.

Research: Much of the research on lycium's health-pro-

moting properties has been done in China, where lycium has demonstrated anti-cancer and antioxidant activity in scores of lab and animal studies. In vitro, the berry has inhibited the growth of leukemia and liver and skin cancer cells. It's also diminished some signs of aging in mice. One clinical trial has shown that lycium may be helpful in treating certain cancers, but much more human research is needed to verify its efficacy.

