

# COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA-FSM YAP CAMPUS AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

## Noni: Safety Concerns

Recently there was a query from a concerned user about the safety of noni juice since rumors are out that it damages human liver and kidneys. The news came as surprise, for though originated in India, noni is a time tested traditional medicine of Pacific islands for several centuries.

Noni fruit has a long history of use as a food in tropical regions throughout the world. In India, its use dates back to Indus Valley Civilization (c.3300 BC). Traditional Indian medicine *Ayurveda* (Science of Living) lists noni as an important medicine which can correct imbalances in the body. Both *Ayurvedic* and Chinese traditions list an impressive set of health benefits from noni. Neither traditions, however, relies as heavily on noni for as many conditions as do the Hawaiians!

Among the 27 canoe plants or Polynesian introductions, noni was called 'Queen of the Canoe Plants.' This is because the early Polynesian settlers were already familiar with its broad medicinal applications, and used every part of the plant to make traditional medicine. Today, it is one of the most important ingredients of Polynesian herbal medicine, being used for a variety of ailments.

Noni products are currently being sold worldwide as a novel food item. It has become one of the most traded products of the Pacific Islands as a raw material to countries outside the region such as New Zealand, Australia, United States, Japan and European countries. The European Commission Scientific Committee on Food evaluated Tahitian

## Does Noni Damage Kidneys?

As with many fruits, the noni fruit is a source of vitamins and minerals, as well as antioxidants. Antioxidants appear to protect the body from age-related changes and certain diseases. Although the juice has an unpleasant taste and odor, it is generally safe to drink. **It neither affects nor damages kidneys.** However, noni juice contains potassium. For this reason, it should be used with caution — if at all — in people with chronic kidney disease or who take potassium-sparing diuretics, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors or angiotensin II receptor blockers because it could cause dangerously elevated blood levels of potassium, a condition called hyperkalemia. High levels of potassium in the blood can result in irregular heart rhythm and heart attacks.

Potassium content of noni juice is similar to that of orange juice and tomato juice, which are generally restricted in the diets of patients with kidney disease

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(FOCUS ON NONI)

## Noni seeds – a good source of essential fatty acid

Hidden in the core of every noni seed does not eat sufficient amounts of is nature's own therapy. The noni seed oil is abundant in linoleic acid, an unsaturated omega-6 fatty acid. Linoleic acid belongs to one of the two classes of essential fatty acids (EFA) that humans require. These acids are called "essential" because they cannot be produced by the human body and must be eaten in food. If a person does not eat sufficient amounts of these EFA (i.e., at least a tablespoon per day), they may start to suffer symptoms including dry hair, hair loss, and poor wound healing. The two families of EFAs are omega-3 which comes from fish oils, and omega-6 which come from vegetable oils (noni **(Noni seeds...)** seed oil is rich in linoleic acid).



*In the next issue...*

## **Noni Search 2008** **Third National Symposium**

### **Noni for Nutrition and Health**

**October 18-19, 2008**  
**New Delhi, India**

*...A Report*

### **Do You Want to**

- **Detoxify your body?**
- **Be energetic?**
- **Stay calm?**
- **Feel fresh?**
- **Sleep better?**
- **Strengthen your immune system?**

*Start Enjoying Noni Today for a Healthier Tomorrow*

*"In these times when our immune systems are compromised on a day to day basis by the air we breathe and the food we eat, it is reassuring to know that there is at least one food which can actually reverse the effects of toxins – and that food is Noni."*

**Diana Fairechild**

noni juice in 2002 but found no indication of adverse effects. These findings were reassessed in 2006 by the European Food Safety Authority's panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies. The panel considered various data including studies conducted in humans and laboratory animals to

#### **(Noni Seeds.... From Page 1)**

Essential Fatty Acids are converted by the body into prostaglandins and other chemicals - all of which are needed constantly by most tissues in the body and for essential body processes. Prostaglandins are substances that are found in every cell, are needed for the body's overall health maintenance, and must be replenished constantly. They play key roles in controlling our blood pressure, heart, kidneys, digestive system, and body temperature. They are also important for allergic reactions, blood clotting and making other hormones.

Fatty acids are also natural blood thinners; they can prevent blood clots, which can lead to heart attack and stroke. Essential fatty acids contain natural anti-inflammatory compounds that can relieve the symptoms of arthritis and autoimmune diseases. In addition, a diet low in essential fatty acids could result in skin problems, such as dandruff, eczema, splitting nails and dull brittle hair.

We lose tremendous fluidity and cell strength when we disregard our daily requirement of EFA's. While Omega 3 is readily available in fish, linoleic acid, is only complete in raw-unheated seeds including flaxseed, safflower, olive, poppy, walnut and soybean. **Noni seed extract is a traditional source of EFA linoleic acid.**

test potential toxicity and confirmed the findings of the Scientific Committee on Food regarding the studies on toxicity, genotoxicity and allergenicity. Eventually, the panel concluded that there is no convincing evidence for a causal relationship between the acute hepatitis observed in the case studies and the consumption of noni juice.

In 2004, British Food Safety Authority granted permission to Pacific Island Noni Association to export different noni juice products to European Union countries on the ground that it is substantially equivalent to the accepted Tahitian noni juice.

Noni does not appear in United States Food and Drug Administration's GRAS (generally regarded as safe) list because it has

never been considered unsafe. FDA does not approve foods of any kind; the agency focuses on products where a decision is needed. It primarily focuses on food additives, food colors and similarly synthetic products rather than on naturally growing fruits and vegetables. Therefore, noni juice is not on a GRAS list or in the food additive database. However, foods held for sale in the United States are expected to be safe and manufactured and labeled according to all applicable laws and regulations.

**However, as with any nutritional supplement or medication, it is always advisable to consult a physician before consuming noni products.**

*Disclaimer: The information provided in this information sheet is meant for educational purpose only. For any medical conditions, always consult a qualified medical practitioner.*

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