

INFORMATION
BULLETIN

COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA-FSM

YAP CAMPUS

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

Welcome to our new monthly information bulletin.

Purpose of this information bulletin is to create an awareness about various subjects of our research and extension programs. First few of this series will focus on noni. Although a time-tested traditional medicine for centuries among Pacific islanders, much of the scientific information about noni is still unknown to our island population. Agricultural Experiment Station initiated a research project in 2006 (with financial assistance from State of Yap and College of Micronesia Land Grant Programs) to promote production agriculture of noni focusing its cultivation, processing and marketing. So far, we conducted two training workshops on topics ranging from its cultivation, processing, marketing and business planning. Yet, there appears to be a gap in the knowledge about this medicinal plant and its varied uses. We hope to fill the gap with this monthly information bulletin. Each issue will focus on certain aspects of noni.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Muru at 350-5752 or e-mail muru@comfsm.fm

Happy reading!

What is Noni?

*Noni is the commercial name attributed to the genus of tropical medicinal plant with scientific name *Morinda citrifolia* (Indian mulberry in English; mangal'weg, in Yapese). Noni is believed to have originated in Southeast Asia, around New Guinea. Later it spread to all Pacific islands along with human migration or by natural means. Noni was one of the 'canoe plants' that ancestors of Polynesians brought with them when they migrated from Southeast Asia about 2000 years ago.*

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(FOCUS ON NONI)



*Luxuriant growth of noni trees on lava soil
(Photo from Hawaii)*

Noni, the wonder plant!

Noni is a medium-sized evergreen tree that reaches about 6-8m in height. The plant grows only in tropical climate but thrives extensive habitats like dry atolls, volcanic lava beds and tide pools. There are distinct varieties differing in morphology. At least three varietal forms are found in Yap. Leaves may be round, elliptic or long and strap-like. The flowers are white and tubular and grow in

clusters. Fruits vary in size from 3 to 10 cm wide and up to 15 cm long. Young fruits are green in color, gradually changing to yellow and translucent white when ripens. Fruits of Micronesian noni varieties are generally smaller in size than Hawaiian noni varieties. Ripe fruits emanate a characteristic, unpleasant fetid smell due to some fatty acid contents. Roots and inner bark of trees range from bright yellow to orange-red in color.

What makes noni so popular?

A variety of noni products are currently available in the market



Noni fruit has a long history of use as 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,

the common name for the plant and its fruit is noni, possibly because the Hawaiian tradition is where we find the richest history of noni use. Hawaii is also where the most important noni research is ongoing today. The University of Hawaii has conducted several important studies and continues to research its nutritional properties, focusing in particular on its potential role in cancer treatment.

Noni is not a medicine but a natural nutritional supplement



Traditional uses of noni

Today, noni cultivation is quite widespread and is seen from Tahiti to India, in the Caribbean, South America, and the West Indies. Despite its unpleasant rancid smell, noni fruit has extensive history of effective medicinal uses among the traditional healers of many cultures. In addition to the fruit, healers also use other parts such as leaf, bark, root, flower and seed for herbal treatments.

DIGESTIVE SYSTEM	INTERNAL DISORDERS	EYES, MOUTH & THROAT
Diarrhea	Diabetes	Eye infections
Intestinal parasites	Hypertension	Inflammation, sore gums
Indigestion	Headache	Sore throat, cough
Stomach ulcers	Kidney and bladder	Gingivitis
BONES AND JOINTS	Tumor	Toothache
Arthritis	Fever	CHEST
Broken bones	GENDER-SPECIFIC	Cough
Sprains	Childbirth and pregnancy	Tuberculosis
SKIN	Menstrual cramps	Asthma
Abscesses, boils, blemishes	Regulate menstruation	Respiratory problems
Wounds, infections	Prostrate complaints	ANTI-AGING TONIC

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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