

A Look at Xanthonenes and Mangosteen

We've all heard the news for years about how important it is to get the right amount of antioxidants in order to keep our bodies healthy and ward off disease. Now there's a new classification of antioxidants called xanthonenes, first discovered in the mangosteen fruit, which are poised to be one of the biggest discoveries of modern science in terms of health benefits. While the concept of antioxidants may seem even more confusing when adding in another aspect, xanthonenes are fairly easy to understand, given their clear-cut, scientifically-proven benefits. What are Xanthonenes? Technically put, xanthonenes are a set of chemical compounds that can be synthetically produced, but are more often found and more potent in their natural settings. Xanthonenes are powerful antioxidants in a family of phytonutrients. To date, researchers have discovered and classified approximately 200 xanthonenes, 40 of which are found in the mangosteen fruit. As a matter of fact, xanthonenes were first discovered when scientists began studying the health benefits of mangosteen based on its traditional indigenous medical uses. Research into the medicinal properties of xanthonenes found in the mangosteen began in the 1970s, and gradually picked up pace as scientists began finding more exciting nutritional properties. Between 1996 and 2005, an exponential amount of research has been done in regards to mangosteen and its xanthonenes, and even more studies are in the works. Xanthonenes in Mangosteen To recap, xanthonenes are powerful antioxidants, and out of the 200 xanthonenes known to science, 40 of them are found in mangosteen. But what do the antioxidant properties of the xanthonenes in mangosteen do for you? Antioxidants function as a balance for free radicals in the body. Free radicals are potentially harmful, yet oftentimes natural substances in your body that, when left free reign, build up and cause diseases like cancer, heart disease, and more. The xanthonenes function to travel through your body, literally mopping up the free radicals on their way, leaving your body cleaner and healthier than before. Some of the most important xanthonenes found in mangosteen include:

Alpha-mangostin

Beta-mangostin

Gamma-mangostin

Garcinone

Garcinone A

Garcinone C

Garcinone D

Mangostanol

Garantin These, among other xanthonenes, have been touted by independent researchers to have properties to include anti-inflammatory, anticonvulsant, antiallergic, antitumor, and antiplatelet, to name just a few. Known Benefits of Xanthonenes Scientific research has made it abundantly clear that no other fruit compares in its health benefits to mangosteen, due to its xanthonenes and other nutritional properties. Helping to fight cancer is just one of the many properties that different xanthonenes perform. For instance, one study performed in Japan showed that the xanthone alpha-mangostin had apparent properties that suppressed the development of tumors. Another, performed in China, found the xanthone garcinone E to show significant anticancer effects in terms of liver, lung, and gastric cancer cells. In addition, some xanthonenes have shown significant antimicrobial effects in terms of fighting MRSA (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus), which is a bacterial strain known for its tenacious resistance to pharmacologic antibiotics. One scientific study also showed that alpha-mangostin, beta-mangostin, and garcinone B to have pronounced inhibition effects on a strain of tuberculosis. As if that isn't enough, xanthonenes have also been scientifically proven to help lower LDL, the bad cholesterol, by protecting the LDL from coming into contact with free radicals, thus leaving it unable to oxidize and attach to arterial walls and cause atherosclerosis. Taking into account the anticancer, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and cholesterol-lowering effects of the xanthonenes found in mangosteen, here is just a sampling of the other many benefits that science has either researched or is in the process of discovering:

Antiviral

Helps lower blood pressure

Helps fight fatigue

Antidepressant

Prevents stomach ulcers

Aids with weight loss

Antiaging

Combats diarrhea

Pain reducer

Heart protective

Analgesic

Anti-parkinsonian and anti-Alzheimer

Lowers fevers

Builds immunity to disease

Antiallergen

Antifungal

Antiparasitic Indeed, even now some health practitioners are suggesting drinking mangosteen juice for relief to people who suffer from the following diseases:

Infections

Skin ailments like psoriasis, seborrhea, or eczema

Joint problems and arthritis

Dementia

Anxiety and depression

Cancer

Chronic pain

Chronic fatigue syndrome

Ulcers

Diabetes
The Fruit with Xanthone Power
As time goes by, it's becoming less and less uncanny how traditional and folk medicine seems to have a grasp on the nutritional properties of food better than modern science has in the past. Indeed, it seems in some cases, especially in that of the mangosteen, science is working to catch up. The mangosteen fruit is believed to have originated in the Moluccas and the Sunda Islands. It's been used for decades upon decades by people from Thailand, the Philippines, and China in folk medicine to treat dysentery, skin disorders like eczema, diarrhea and cystitis, among other ailments. One of the reasons why mangosteen is only now gaining notoriety and popularity is because, for many years, direct importation of the fruit from other countries has been illegal, based on governmental regulations to help quarantine the Asian fruit fly. Unfortunately, the mangosteen tree doesn't grow well in most or all climates in the United States, so attempts to grow the fruit here have been relatively unsuccessful. However, as science has begun proving the unsurpassed medical value of the rare mangosteen fruit and its xanthenes, juices and preserves are becoming more and more readily available. In terms of taste, the mangosteen itself is considered one of the most exquisitely delicious fruits nature has to offer. Often called the "Queen of Fruits," the taste of mangosteen is unique, but is often described as sweet and tangy with hints of pear, ripe strawberry, and grape. After sampling mangosteen, it's easy to see why this fruit is so popular in Thailand due to its taste. And after learning about the benefits of the xanthenes found in mangosteen, it's even more clear how nutritionally beneficial this amazing fruit is.

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