

the healthy swimmer



Johanna Goodyear

Mild-Mannered Blueberries Possess Super Powers

New research suggests that one of the world's smallest fruits, the blueberry, may also be one of the most powerful anti-aging defenses. Researchers at the National Institute on Aging (NIA) report that the natural compounds found in wild blueberries increased lifespan and slowed aging-related declines in a whole organism. The study examined the effects of wild blueberry polyphenols on the lifespan and aging of microscopic, invertebrate worms called elegans.

In two other studies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Human Nutrition Center (HNRCA) found that blueberries ranked first in antioxidant activity when compared to 40 other fresh fruits and vegetables. Blueberries also slowed age-related loss of mental capacity in laboratory rats.

Blueberries grow in many

places around the world, including Asia, Europe, South America and North America. According to the National Highbush Blueberry Council, the use of blueberries for medicinal purposes can be traced to the Native Americans, who prescribed blueberry juice to relieve coughs. Native Americans also made tea from wild blueberry leaves—believed to help purify the blood—and a strong aromatic tea from the plant's root—used as a relaxant during childbirth.

The council notes that blueberries contain a pigment called anthocyanin, thought to be responsible for a wide range of health benefits, including improved eyesight, reduced cholesterol and the prevention of urinary tract infections. Blueberries also contain tannins, alkaloids, phenolic acids and glycosides—all thought to have medicinal benefits. <<<

reader recipe

Looking for a delicious, low-fat frozen dessert? Granita, a type of Italian ice, is a healthy, refreshing and easy-to-prepare alternative to dairy-based frozen desserts.

Blueberry Granita

- 4 c fresh blueberries
- 2 c water
- 1 t lemon zest
- 2 t lemon juice
- 1/2 c sugar

In a medium-sized saucepan, combine blueberries, lemon zest and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until blueberries are very soft. Strain the mixture over a bowl using a fine sieve, pressing the berries with the back of a large spoon to remove excess liquid. Stir lemon juice into pureed berries, and chill.

In a saucepan, combine sugar and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until sugar dissolves. Pour liquid into a bowl and chill.

When both mixtures are chilled, stir sugar syrup into blueberry puree and pour mixture into a shallow pan. Freeze mixture until ice crystals form around the edges of the pan (about 60 minutes).

Using a fork, scrape the ice crystals from edges and stir into the mixture. Freeze mixture until fully frozen, about 1 to 1-1/2 hours longer, stirring several times. Serve in chilled martini glasses.

8 servings, 85 calories per serving, 0 calories from fat <<<

>>> DO YOU HAVE A RECIPE OUR READERS WOULD ENJOY?

Send it to editor@usms.org, or mail to: Reader Recipe, c/o Bill Volckening, 1220 NW 119th Place, Portland, OR 97229.

Recently Read:

The New American Heart Association Cookbook

Now in its seventh edition, *The New American Heart Association Cookbook* is back and bigger than ever.

With more than 600 exciting and flavorful recipes—including 150 new ones—the American Heart Association's flagship cookbook covers it all, from breakfast to dessert. Recipes include a rich, heart-healthy Sun-Dried Tomato and Kalamata Olive Chicken, savory Artichoke-Tomato Pizza and a tempting Chocolate Crème Brûlée.

With the latest information about the connection between good food and good health, it is the ultimate heart-healthy cookbook. The American Heart Association also offers a related collection of online resources called Delicious Decisions. Resources include supermarket strategies, smart eating options, tips on dining out at restaurants and recipes. For more details, visit www.deliciousdecisions.org.

The New American Heart Association Cookbook is published by Clarkson Potter/Publishers, a division of Random House Inc., and the hardcover edition retails for \$30. <<<



For Spinal Safety: Feet-First Entry

According to the United States Lifesaving Association, the incidence of spinal injuries continues to be a serious problem, but this type of injury is preventable. Spinal injuries in swimming are usually associated with diving headfirst and hitting the bottom. Perhaps more than any other trauma, head injury can have severe lifelong consequences.

USMS has a rule about entering the water feet first during warm-ups in competition, and this rule is a good general guideline for all swimmers at all times. Rule 102.4.2 states: "Swimmers must enter the pool feet first in a cautious and controlled manner. Diving shall be permitted only in the designated lanes."

Although the rule was written for competition, it is a good guideline for people swimming in groups at the pool, and those entering natural bodies of water. If the water is shallow, the pool is crowded or you can't see the bottom, avoid spinal injury by entering feet first, and in a cautious and controlled manner. <<<



Do Pesticides Contribute to Parkinson's?

Analysts at the Harvard School of Public Health have found a new link between long-term exposure to pesticides and Parkinson's disease. A recent article published in the *Annals of Neurology* reports that people with long-term exposure to pesticides had a higher incidence of Parkinson's compared to people who had not been exposed. The research substantiated other studies that have reported links between Parkinson's and a class of chemicals called organophosphates.

Parkinson's is a disorder of the central nervous system. Early symptoms include tremor and movement disorders, but the disease can progress to paralysis and, ultimately, death.

There is no known cure, and Parkinson's affects an estimated 6.3 million people worldwide.

Harvard researchers studied data from a 2001 survey by the American Cancer Society, which included 143,325 people. Original data included factors for cancer risk, lifestyle, nutrition and environmental exposures.

Nearly 8,000 people—5,200 men and 2,600 women—reported exposure to pesticides. With data adjusted for other risk factors such as age and sex, researchers discovered an alarming trend. People who reported exposure to pesticides had a 70 percent higher incidence of Parkinson's than those who were not exposed. The study did not associate any other environmental substances with a higher risk for the disorder. <<<



Going Organic? Read the Labels

During the last decade, organic food has become a booming industry in the United States. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), organic products are now available in approximately 20,000 natural foods stores, and are sold in about 75 percent of all conventional supermarkets.

Growing consumer demand for organic products has been manifested in the market in many ways, including increased availability and affordability of products. When making organic purchases, labeling is an important consideration.

The term "organic" refers to the method of growing. Organic foods are minimally processed to maintain the integrity of the food without artificial ingredients, preservatives, synthetic pesticides, fertilizers or irradiation. In 2002, the USDA established a set of national standards for foods labeled as organic. The three categories of labeling include "100 percent organic," "organic" and "made with organic ingredients."

According to the USDA, products labeled "100 percent organic" must contain only organically produced ingredients, and products labeled "organic" must consist of at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients. These labeling requirements exclude water and salt. Processed products that contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients can use the phrase "made with organic ingredients" and list up to three of the organic ingredients or food groups on the principal display panel. <<<

>>> For more detailed information on the USDA organic standards, visit the USDA web site at www.ams.usda.gov/nop, or call the National Organic Program at 202-720-3252.

The information in this department is not intended as a substitute for professional or medical advice. It is not intended to provide medical advice on personal health matters. For personal medical advice, consult your healthcare provider. If you are concerned about a particular medical condition or injury, see your healthcare provider for evaluation and care.