The berry itself has a low sugar content and in a mild tart taste. It contains a glycoprotein molecule, with some tasting the fruit as sour, while others report it as sweet. Some people develop a metallic taste in their mouth after eating the fruit. The fruit is considered a low-calorie food, but efforts to commercialize it failed due to cost and technical challenges. It has been used as a natural sweetener in some cultures, but its use in the food industry is still limited.

**Cultivation**

The plant grows best in soils with a pH as low as 4.5 to 5.0, in an environment free from frost and in partial shade with high humidity. It is tolerant of drought, full sun and shade. The seeds need 14 to 21 days to germinate. A spacing of 4 m between plants is suggested. The plants first bear fruit after growing for approximately 3–4 years, and produce two crops per year, after the end of the rainy season. This evergreen plant produces small, red berries, white flowers for many months of the year. The seeds are about the size of coffee beans.

In Africa, leaves are eaten by lepidopterous larvae, and fruits are indured by larvae of fruit flies. The basilisk Rhipidopon microperon has been found on this plant.

Transgenic tomato plants have been developed in research projects that produce miraculin.

**Uses**

In tropical West Africa, where this species originates, the berry plant is used to sweeten palm wine. Historically, it was also used to improve the flavor of fermented foods such as cornbread and pickles. The miracle berry plant is used to sweeten fermented foods without a caloric penalty, but ended in failure when the FDA considered the fruit to be a sweetener. The miracle berry has been found on this plant. It has been used as a natural sweetener in some cultures, but its use in the food industry is still limited.

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