



Southern University and A&M College System
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER
Ashford O. Williams Hall ~ P. O. Box 10010
Baton Rouge, LA 70813
(225) 771-2262 office ~ (225) 771-4464 fax
www.suagcenter.com

Food Value of Roselle, *Hibiscus Sabdariffa* – Tea

Scientists at Southern University Ag Center are conducting research on *Hibiscus sabdariffa*, investigating its nutritional value under various growing conditions. The project plans to introduce its products to food markets and to reach our small farmers to increase its marketability and profitability. This flyer presents the basic information regarding the food value (namely tea) of Roselle, *Hibiscus sabdariffa*.

We have been growing Roselle at SU Ag Center for the last two years, studying its growth, development, and biochemistry. We have found out that Roselle can be grown in Southern Louisiana, and we hope to introduce Roselle to small farmers and growers in Louisiana, so

they can use Roselle to produce functional food and value-added products.

Many parts of Roselle including seeds, leaves, fruits and roots are used in various foods. Among them, the fleshy red calyces are the most popular. They are used fresh for making wine, juice, jam, jelly, syrup, gelatin, pudding, cakes, ice cream and flavors and also dried and brewed into **tea**, among other things. The red calyces contain antioxidants including flavonoids, gossypetine, hibiscetine and sabdaretine.

Hibiscus tea:

Hibiscus tea is a caffeine free herbal tea from a special type of hibiscus, called Roselle, the scientific name is *Hibiscus sabdariffa*. Specifically, the tea is made out of the dried fruit part of Roselle, called calyx. It is in red color and tastes like berries.



Roselle, *Hibiscus sabdariffa*



Roselle hibiscus grown at Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

Health benefits:

The hibiscus tea contains high levels of antioxidants, such as flavonoids, which are good for our hearts and bodies. Flavonoids comprise a group of compounds that give the color to red wine, watermelon, and grapefruits. These antioxidants help our bodies fight the harmful molecules known as free radicals, which can cause cell damage leaving the body in a diseased state. By taming free radicals, antioxidants help maintain the body's good health.

Research shows that drinking two cups of black tea a day provides as many heart-healthy flavonoids as a serving of fruits and vegetables.

Drinking tea may lower bad cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease according to a USDA study.

In summary, drinking tea can enhance body's ability to fight stress and help maintain body's good health.

Where hibiscus tea can be purchased?

You can get caffeine free herbal tea that contains hibiscus from specialty tea companies and from supermarkets. Just pay attention to the labels of ingredients, you will find many types of herbal tea contain hibiscus as a major component plus other ingredients to give different flavors.

To get what you want, the best thing is to grow your own Roselle and make your own hibiscus tea.

How to prepare hibiscus tea?

First, collect the hibiscus fruits and wash them clean, and air dry or dry them in an oven at 70 degree C for 3 days, then peel off the calyx and store them in air-tight containers.

To make tea, simply take 2 grams of the dried calyx, and crash them into small pieces using a wooden roller, then put them in a tea bag or a net, bring out your favorite mug, add 8 oz of boiling



Roselle fruit used for making tea

water, steep it for 2-4 minutes, add sugar if desired, or add other flavors of your choice such as few drops of lemon juice. Here you go, you have lemon zinger tea. You can also refrigerate it and make hibiscus iced tea.

Project Director

Dr. Kit L. Chin, Professor, Plant and Soil Science Program, Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA

Project Scientists

Dr. Yadong Qi, Professor, Urban Forestry Program, Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA

Dr. Fatemah Malekian, Associate Professor, Food Science and Nutrition, Southern University Ag Center, Baton Rouge, LA

Dr. Owusu Bandele, Professor, Plant and Soil Science, Southern University Ag Center, Baton Rouge, LA

Mrs. Mila Berhane, Research Associate, Plant and Soil Science Program, Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA

Ms. Janet Gager, Research Associate, Food Science and Nutrition, Southern University Ag Center, Baton Rouge, LA.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Dr. Bridget Udoh, Communication Specialist at SUAREC for her editorial work.

For more information, please contact:

SU Agricultural Research and Extension Center

Dr. Kit. L. Chin at 225-771-2440
kit_chin@cxs.subr.edu

Dr. Yadong Qi, at 225-771-2262 ext 269
yadong_qi@suagcenter.com

Dr. Fatemah Malekian, at 225-771-2262 ext 265
fatemeh_malekian@suagcenter.com