

CAYENNE



Capsicum annuum

Solanaceae

A farmer used to give Cayenne to his chickens and cows when they were ailing, but never to the children when they were sick. One of the sons said, "We were worth more to him than those animals! He should have given it to us, too." Dr. Christopher assured us that Cayenne is one of the greatest herbs of all time—though it is also one of the most misunderstood and ridiculed. He said that every home should have a good supply of Cayenne pepper.

When only a young man in his thirties, Dr. Christopher was told by the medical doctors that he could not live past his fortieth year because of arthritis, hardening of arteries, stomach ulcers, and some automobile accidents that had damaged him rather badly. He was so concerned that he started using Cayenne, working up to a teaspoon taken three times a day. By the time he was forty-five years old, he was working in a business wherein the group wanted him to have a \$100,000 insurance policy because of the importance of the business deal.

Because it was such a large policy, the company required the examination to be given by two medical doctors, each to examine twice. At the end of one of these physicals, one of the doctors said, "This is astounding! You have the venous structure of a teenage boy, at forty-five years of age!"

The other doctor kept pumping up his blood pressure equipment over and over again, repeating the blood pressure check. Dr. Christopher began to be perturbed, and asked him if the equipment was broken. "It always has worked up till now, but I keep looking at your chart, which says you are forty-five years old, and yet your systolic over your diastolic is absolutely perfect. I cannot comprehend it." Dr. Christopher assured him that it was indeed perfect, and he attributed this clean bill of health to Cayenne.

However, Dr. Christopher needed to be converted to the use of Cayenne. When he was attending the Herbal College in Canada, the teacher announced that they were going to study Cayenne. "Why Cayenne?" asked Dr. Christopher. "It will burn the lining out of the stomach."

"Where did you get your information," asked the teacher, Dr. Nowell. "Oh, my mother told me," answered Dr. Christopher.

Everybody in the class laughed-except the teacher and Dr. Christopher. Dr. Nowell took Dr. Christopher around Vancouver and introduced him to over a dozen people whose lives had been saved with Cayenne: people with heart troubles, ulcers, asthma, and many other ailments. Wherever they went, the people were full of gratitude for being taught about Cayenne, and from then on Dr. Christopher was sold on it.

While Dr. Christopher was working in the business world, he was taking Cayenne, and on one business trip, he was traveling with an athlete, a man who had a black belt in karate and who was, in Dr. Christopher's words, "a husky little guy." Yet he came from a family with a history of high blood pressure, and his uncle had died of varicosity. He was under the care of a doctor at the time. Every morning, Dr. Christopher would take a spoonful of Cayenne in a glassful of water, followed by a few tablespoons of wheat germ oil. The young man wanted to know what Dr. Christopher was taking and wanted to try some. "You're probably too chicken," Dr. Christopher told him! This reverse psychology worked; Dr. Christopher noticed that his Cayenne was disappearing gradually. When they returned from the trip, the man continued taking Cayenne, one teaspoonful three times a day. The doctor was astonished at the young man's next checkup - after a lifetime of high blood pressure, he now had a clean bill of health.

Once a child was shot in the abdomen; a bullet hit the spine, ricocheted, and made a second wound leaving the body. One of Dr. Christopher's herbal students, living next door, heard the shot and raced over, as she knew that the parents were not home and that the children, ages eight and four, would not be shooting guns. There was the eight-year-old gushing blood out both sides. She ran to the cabinet and mixed a tablespoonful of cayenne in a glass of water; she poured it down the boy and immediately called the ambulance, which was eighteen miles away. The emergency room attendant said that the boy would probably bleed to death, being that the distance was so great. The ambulance arrived and rushed the child (who had been playing "Cops and Robbers" with his fathers pistol, which he had found Under the pillow of the bed, to the Primary Children's Hospital eighteen miles away. When he arrived, he was the center of attraction, not because his ease was so dangerous, but because he was chatting a mile a minute - and there was not bleeding. The bleeding had stopped by the time they arrived at the hospital. The chief doctor said to the parents, "I have seen many accident victims in my life, but this is the first time in such an emergency operation that I have opened an abdomen to find no blood, except for a small amount that was there before the bleeding stopped so quickly. This has saved your boy's life."

In that same year, Dr. Christopher treated four other gunshot victims, and each ease responded the same, although sometimes the blood coagulates and comes out in clumps before it stops completely. By the time you count to ten, however, the heavy bleeding should stop completely after administering Cayenne. The Doctor even used tincture of Cayenne on open wounds and, as he put it, "There may be a bit of muttering about it," referring to the burning feeling of the Cayenne, but the bleeding stops.

Dr. Christopher related the humorous story of a very fine student of his who had begun teaching herb classes on his own. This young man happened to precede Dr. Christopher's lecture one evening in

Arizona. The young man said, “You know, ladies and gentlemen, that Dr. Christopher has always made me gasp. I've seen him drink two or three tablespoons of Cayenne in water - and I'd just shudder. But tonight I'm going to do something that he may have never done himself.” With that, he reached down into a container of Cayenne and threw a pinch right into his eye. Dr. Christopher thought that the man must have gone crazy and he was concerned that one of his students would do such a thing in public, although he knew that Cayenne can never hurt the cell structure, no matter how delicate it is. The tears ran down the man's cheek as he continued talking, and when he was finished, he opened his eye and invited everyone to look. The eye just sparkled; it was by far the brighter of the two, although Dr. Christopher said that he never had seen this antic performed again - and that he never dared to try it himself.

A lady who had been attending Dr. Christopher's lectures over the years told the story of her husband who had a severe case of stomach ulcers. The doctor recommended that part of the stomach be removed, but the man preferred to suffer the pain rather than risk such an operation. But he also ridiculed his wife's recommendations to use Cayenne and other herbs. Whenever he would see Dr. Christopher in town, he'd bellow, “Hello, Doc! Killed anybody with Cayenne today?” Naturally, Dr. Christopher tried to avoid him, but one day he came directly to the Doctor—but this time without any sarcasm, instead being very apologetic, telling this story.

He had come home from work one night, so sick he wanted to die, with stomach ulcers. His wife was not home, but he was in such pain that he decided to commit suicide. When he looked into the medicine cabinet to find some kind of medicine poisonous enough to kill him, he discovered that his wife had discarded all the old bottles of pharmaceutical medicines. All he could find were some bottles of herbs and a large container of Cayenne pepper. He figured that a large dose of that would kill him, so he took a heaping tablespoon in a glass of hot water, gulped it down, rushed into the bedroom, and covered his head with a pillow so that the neighbors couldn't hear his dying screams.

The next thing he knew, his wife was shaking him awake the next morning. He had slept all night, the first time in years, instead of waking every half hour or so for anti-acid tablets. To his amazement, all his pain was gone. He continued using the Cayenne faithfully, three times a day, and never had any more trouble with ulcers.

Once, when traveling with a business partner, Dr. Christopher recommended Cayenne to him, as the man had extremely high blood pressure and such bad hemorrhoids that he had to wear a belt. Dr. Christopher used the same reverse psychology on this man - “I don't think you are brave enough”—and pretty soon the man was taking the Cayenne and the wheat germ oil, too. In a few months, he did not have to wear a belt any longer, and his systolic and diastolic at his blood pressure examination were nearly perfect. He no longer had to go to the doctor—and he lived many long years, for he kept taking his Cayenne.

Early in Dr. Christopher's practice, he was called in the middle of the night by a woman whose husband had just passed out from a heart attack. The Doctor told the woman to heat some water, and he arrived at the house and mixed a teaspoon of Cayenne into the water, propped up the man, and gave him just a little. When he came to, he finished the cup, and within a few minutes felt much stronger. Soon he was well, and became converted to the use of herbs, even buying and running one of the health food stores in Salt Lake City for many years.

One young man had cut his hand deeply, fingers as well as the palm. The blood spurted out in streams. He poured a large amount of Cayenne into the wound, and within seconds the blood flow slowed down, congealed, and stopped. He wrapped the wound, covering it first with a goodly amount of Cayenne. He was so excited about these results that he could hardly wait to attend the next herb lecture to tell about it.

But when he unwrapped the bandage to show the audience, instead of a deep, ugly scar, the area was healed and there was no scar at all!

Cayenne can be used on any part of the body and for anybody, Dr. Christopher claimed. He even saved the life of a six-week-old baby who was born with chronic asthma by giving Cayenne tea, from an eyedropper, until the baby was able to breathe again. He said that Cayenne could even be given by enema for chronic constipation (if you are brave!).

At the age of seventy, a few years before he died, Dr. Christopher was asked by a premed student if he could take his blood pressure. The lecture group saw the blood pressure reading of a healthy young man, not the average reading of a seventy-year-old. In addition to a healthy life-style and the mucusless diet, Dr. Christopher attributed this good reading to his thrice-daily dose of Cayenne.

To show what a miracle worker Cayenne really is, Dr. Christopher related the experiment performed by medical doctors in the eastern United States—and printed in the medical journals. They put some live heart tissue in a beaker filled with distilled water, and fed it nothing but Cayenne pepper, cleaning off sediments periodically and adding nothing else but distilled water to replace that which was lost from evaporation. During the experiment, they would have to trim the tissue every few days, because it would grow so rapidly! Having no control glands (pituitary and pineal), the tissue just continued to grow rapidly. They kept this tissue alive for fifteen years. After the doctor doing the experiment died, his associates kept it alive for two more years before destroying it for analysis. This shows the tremendous regenerative and healing power of Cayenne, especially upon the heart.

A History of the Healing Chili

The Capsicums are ancient natives of the New World, the oldest known specimens coming from Mexico. From seeds found on the floors of caves that were ancient human dwellings and from ancient fossil feces, scientists have found the people were eating peppers as early as 7000 BC. Presumably originating as wild plants, hot peppers were cultivated between 5200 and 3400 BC. (Heiser: 18), among the oldest cultivated plants of the world. In South America, peppers recovered at the archaeological site of Huaca Prieta have been dated at 2500 BC, these specimens being larger than the wild peppers and therefore presumably cultivated (Ibid). Archaeological research in the Tehucan Valley revealed that among other crops, chilies were cultivated during the Coxcatlan era, around 4000 BC (Johnson, ed.: 150)

Capsicum was introduced to Europe by the historian who accompanied Columbus to the New World, Peter Martyr. He reported the use of these pungent peppers, and the ships physician, Dr. Chatica, reported their use as a condiment and as a medicine, an irony considering that Columbus was seeking the spices of the Far East (Heiser, op.. cit.)

Later, scholars sent from Spain to the New World, notably to Mexico and Central America, chronicle the extensive use of chili peppers in the diet of the Indians. Next to maize, a certain Cobo wrote, it was the foremost plant in the land; and a Garcilaso said that the Peruvian Indians valued chilies more than any other plant, never cooking a dish without them. The Jesuit Acosta noted that it was an item of considerable value for trade in areas where chili did not grow, that it “comforted the stomach” when taken in moderation, and that some of the Indians made offerings of peppers to their gods (Ibid.).

According to sixteenth century historians, South American warriors would burn peppers to use the smoke against the invading Spanish (Ibid.). Interestingly, during the Vietnam war, Buddhist monks armed themselves with spray guns filled with a mixture of lemon juice, curry powder, and Cayenne.

Cayenne peppers reached southeastern Asia a few years after the discovery of America, and today they are almost as important in tropical Asian cuisine and medicine as they are in tropical America. In fact, these peppers became so well established in India not long after their migration that early botanists thought they were indigenous. In India they are an indispensable part of curry, which is a universal ingredient in most Indian cuisine. Peppers are also widely used throughout Africa, and the African produce is thought to be the hottest in the world, perhaps due to climatic or edaphic factors, though it may be due to specialized breeding (Heiser, op. cit). In Ethiopia, the national dish, *wort*, or Cayenne portage, features this pungent powder. Salt and powdered Cayenne pods are mixed with a little pea or bean meal and made into a paste called *dillock*. This is kept in a gourd, often hung from the house roof, and used a little at a time, *wort* being made by adding water to the paste and then boiling the mixture (Ibid.).

Cayenne was introduced into Britain from India in 1548, and Gerard mentioned it as being cultivated in his time (Gri: 175). It is used in folk medicine in various parts of the world, notably Greece, Italy, and parts of Russia, where it is steeped in Vodka and drunk as a tonic in wine glassful doses (Hut:68). It grows and is used abundantly in the West Indies, where the Negroes value it as a certain remedy for many ailments (Klo:217). It is especially valued there for the deadly fevers, especially yellow fever, of which the native people have no fear as long as they have a goodly supply of *Capsicum* (Ibid.). As in Mexico, the children and adults alike snack on hot pepper pods, eating them one after another “as we would do so many doughnuts,” said Kloss.

Cayenne is one of the main foods of the Hunzas in Asia Minor, along with apricots and their pits, millet, and other such simple foods. They live to over a hundred years of age, sometimes play polo at the age of 150, and generally die not from diseases, but from falls or accidents (Herbalist:I:I:3 2).

Capsicum was early cited as growing in the Hawaiian Islands, cultivated and escaped varieties noted as early as 1897, though the fruits were small and very pungent. It was known as “Hawaiian Chili Peppers.”

In Mexico today, Chilies of various kinds supplement the daily diet and, in addition to providing spice and essential nutrients to an otherwise bland and repetitious diet of tortillas, beans, squash, pumpkins, potatoes and the like, they perform important medicinal functions. Visitors to Mexico often suffer from “Montezuma's Revenge,” a particularly devastating kind of amoebic dysentery. However, if they will eat hot chill with their meals the way the native Mexicans do, they will not suffer this disease. Juliette de Bairacli Levy, when living in Mexico with her small children, did not hesitate to let them drink raw milk—a practice frowned upon by most because of the certainty of dysenteric infection. She spiked the milk with a generous dose of Cayenne and the children were never infected. She noted, too, that eventually the children came to relish the hot-tasting milk. It is reported that the Mexicans, who ingest such quantities of Chili that their bodies are infused with it, are not attacked by predatory birds, if they happen to perish by accident in the deserts; vultures won't touch the Chili-laden body.

Cayenne pepper is the name for the hottest form of *Capsicum*, which can take other forms. If its heat is 1 BTU, this mild *Capsicum* is called paprika; if it is from one to twenty-five BTU, it is called simply red pepper; but over twenty-five BTU rating is termed Cayenne. Therefore Cayenne is the strongest of the *Capsicum* family. In Mexico alone, many varieties (some claim fifteen or more) of peppers are grown, each with a distinctive flavor, and often very hot indeed. Other important varieties are grown in Japan (predominantly used, dried, in cooking), the United States, and Africa, the latter being valued as a high-quality medicinal Cayenne.

One of the United States varieties, imported from the Mexican state of Tabasco, has attained great renown. An American soldier, returning from the Mexican War of 1846-48, brought some pepper seeds to Edward McIlhenny, a banker, who grew plants from them in Louisiana. McIlhenny found that the peppers made a delightfully piquant sauce. During the Civil War, he left Louisiana, but when he returned, finding his plants still flourishing, was persuaded to market his sauce. Since the war had left him without an

income, he thought this was worth a try, and the venture proved successful; Tabasco Sauce is a gourmet treat throughout the world (Heiser: 12).

Cayenne pepper was a mainstay of the Thomsonian School of Medicine, Samuel Thomson, the original Botanic Physician, having featured it along with Lobelia in his healing routines. It was an important ingredient in his Composition Powder, and he also used it as a stimulant and an assist to the emetic properties of Lobelia.

Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, was said to have advocated the use of Cayenne. His successor, Brigham Young, eschewing the services of orthodox medical practitioners, encouraged the use of Cayenne and of Composition Powder, the latter even serving as a beverage in place of regular tea or other drinks. Many of the early Church members were well versed in botanic medicine, an interesting example being Priddy Meeks, who was a thoroughgoing herbal practitioner and whose journal we possess today. He gave Cayenne pepper to a young man who had attempted to journey from California back to the East. His feet were both frozen up to his ankles. Meeks felt, “as though by inspiration,” that he should try Cayenne internally for the case.

Having given the man too much at first, Meeks reduced the dose as the frozen feet began to hurt terribly. When the dose seemed right, an unusual event occurred: the frozen flesh would rot and rope down from his foot, when it would be on his knee, then clear to the floor, and the new flesh would form as fast as the dead flesh would drop. It seemed to Meeks that the dead flesh was getting out of the way to make room for the new flesh. After sixteen days, the man was able to walk again, having lost only five toenails, instead of both feet—an unusual tale indeed! Meeks related many other cases he healed with Cayenne pepper; he was much in demand with these simple remedies.

In England, Cayenne was called “Ginnie pepper,” since it was purchased from “Guinea,” or the Indies. Being official in both the United States and British pharmacopoeias (even until the 1950’s), Cayenne was an ingredient in many of the cure-all remedies of the last century; in fact, it was often the main ingredient, along with aloes and a little soap. The British pharmacopoeia requires that Capsicum should yield not more than six percent of ash, and this will detect any adulterants, which include ground fruit stone, linseed, ground cereal products, oxide of red lead, and colored sawdust (Gri: 176).

Cayenne or Capsicum derives its name from the Greek *kaptos*, I bite, an allusion to the pungent properties of the fruits and seeds. Although the origin of the species is obscured in antiquity, as described above, experts believe that all the varieties of chilies originated in one species. For this reason the botanical classification of these plants is sometimes muddled, and Capsicum *annuum* is sometimes described as Capsicum *frutescens* (Stuart: 166). Some sources indicate that our valuable Cayenne is really Capsicum *fastigiatum* (Bar: 148), or Capsicum *minimum* (Hut:67). All of this confusion points to the point we made earlier, that the medicinal Cayenne is classed according to its BTU rating rather than its species.

Other names for Cayenne include African pepper, African red pepper, and African bird pepper, all alluding to the most pungent and superior product obtained from Africa, although this can be light brownish-yellow instead of red in color (Gri:176). It is also called American red pepper, Spanish pepper, and Guinea pepper, as it is obtained from these places. We are already familiar with its name, Chili, in Mexico; in French it is called Capsique or Poivre de Cayenne, and in German it is Spanischer Pfeffer or Schlotenpfeffer.

MOST CERTAIN STIMULANT—AND NEARLY A CURE-ALL

One of the most important uses of (Cayenne is as a circulatory stimulant, an herb that feeds the necessary elements into the cell structure of the arteries, veins, and capillaries so that they, regain youthful elasticity and so that the blood pressure reduces itself to normal. When the venous structure becomes loaded with sticky mucus, the blood cannot circulate freely, so higher pressure is needed to force the blood through.

Cayenne equalizes the blood pressure, influencing the heart immediately, and then extending its effects to the venous structure (SNH:407). It also works to cut the mucus in the venous system, and indeed in all the systems throughout the body.

Cayenne is a certain remedy for heart attack; as a stimulant, it can start the heart into action again, and as it facilitates blood flow throughout the body, it will keep the heart going. Used as a heart attack preventative, along with the mucusless diet and a healthful life-style, Cayenne can do wonders in toning and rebuilding the heart and keeping it in top condition. As we will discuss later, Cayenne is one of the richest and most stable sources of Vitamin E, which is known to be a heart builder.

The most common medical use of Cayenne is as a gastric stimulant and digestive aid. It rebuilds the stomach tissue and stimulates peristalsis, thus assisting in assimilation and elimination. In the West Indies, a preparation called Mandram is used for weak digestion and loss of appetite; this is made of thinly sliced, unskinned cucumbers, shallots, chives or onions, lemon or lime juice, Madeira, and a few pods of Cayenne well mashed up in the liquids. It can be used as a chutney or garnish (Gri: 176)

Cayenne is used as a diaphoretic-sweat inducing-herb, especially useful when combined with other powerful diaphoretics such as yarrow, blue vervain, bayberry, etc. It should be given when a chili is coming on, to offset a cold, or to help break a fever, as it sustains the portal circulation (Klo:220) and assists in the removal of mucus, as well as inducing perspiration.

If one believes in the use of emesis to cleanse the stomach, such as the Thomsonians did, large doses of Cayenne will certainly do the job without causing any harm to the patient. If combined with an emetic, such as Lobelia, Cayenne will help the emesis continue over a longer period and prevent bruising or other discomfort. If a person swallows a noxious substance or polluted food or drink, this Lobelia-Cayenne combination will work surely to bring it up. Be sure not to induce vomiting, however, if a corrosive substance has been ingested.

As related above, Cayenne works powerfully to arrest bleeding. You can place Cayenne powder or tincture directly upon an open wound, even one that is gushing blood, and by the count of ten, the bleeding will cease. If there is internal hemorrhaging, in the lungs, stomach, uterus or nose, have the person take a teaspoonful of Cayenne in a glass of quite warm water; the blood pressure will be equalized, taking the pressure off from the affected part, clotting will begin, and the hemorrhage will stop. For hemorrhage of the lungs, a vapor bath with warm Cayenne can do the same thing. In an external wound, even if the cut is so deep it goes to the bone you may fill it with Cayenne pepper and the bleeding will stop and the wound will heal beautifully. A woman fell while descending stairs to the basement and struck her head on the overhang above the staircase. She fell on her elbow and hip as well, but she had hit her eye so badly that it was oozing blood down her face. She found her way upstairs, and “dumped a pile of Cayenne into her hand and pressed it against her wounded eye” (Herbalist:March, 1978:30). She also took Cayenne internally and applied an ice pack. By this time the bleeding had stopped, and she applied Dr. Christopher's Comfrey Poultice, made with wheat-germ oil and honey, to her eye wound and other facial wounds. When she went to the doctor, he cleaned out the wound and told her that she would bruise very badly and that, if she wished, he would re-cut the wound and stitch it, as she had passed the eight-hour limit for stitches.

She kept taking the Cayenne and rubbing wheat-germ oil and other oils and herbs on the wound. She also applied wet hot packs for the itching associated with healing. After a few days, the marks of the accident were nearly cleared up, although the doctor had predicted many days of discolor and discomfort. This lady - who has teenage grandchildren—credits her quick healing to Cayenne (Ibid.)

Cayenne is used externally as a liniment as well, effective for wounds, bruises, scalds, burns, and sunburns, applied freely. You can rinse the mouth with the liniment for pyorrhea (Mal:84). It brings out

toxic poisons and can be used to relieve lung congestion as well as external problems. It will bring relief for the sufferer of rheumatism. A simple liniment is made by simmering 1 tablespoonful of Cayenne in 1 pint of Apple cider vinegar; bottle, unstained, while still hot. You can also combine the Cayenne with other herbs, such as Golden Seal, Lobelia, etc., to obtain their beneficial effects in the liniment. A plaster of Cayenne, made with bran or hops and combined with Lobelia, is valuable in pneumonia, pleurisy, and other congestion's. Many famous commercial ointments sold by Rawleighs, Watkins, and others, are high in Cayenne.

Cayenne is extremely valuable as an emmenagogue. It will act as a carrier for uterine herbs such as Blessed thistle, taking them directly to the uterus. When expectant mothers go into labor, midwives commonly give them a drink made of Cayenne, apple cider vinegar, honey, and warm water. This stimulates good contractions, gives energy—and as an added benefit, circumvents any possible hemorrhage and acts as an anti-shock remedy, as labor often brings about shock. In fact, this combination is a most efficient anti-shock remedy and should be supplied in any case of shock. Cayenne in hot water alone will also work.

Cayenne will increase a persons feeling of vitality and activity—as it is a stimulant—without any bad aftereffects, such as do other stimulants. Combined with Lobelia, it is wonderful in cases of depression or low spirits.

Capsicum is an excellent antiseptic. For infectious sore throat, combine it with slippery elm and lobelia. It will kill germs when applied to wounds, and can be taken to ward off diseases one has been exposed to (Herbalist 1:1:33).

Since it works so effectively to eliminate mucus from the body, it is an excellent expectorant. Mixed with ginger, it does a wonderful job of cleaning out the bronchial tubes and sinus cavities and relieving immediately all problems of colds and congestion (Mal:85).

Cayenne is used as an accentuator with other herbs; it increases the value and healing properties of the herbs and carries them to the afflicted part of the body. Indeed, Cayenne affects every portion of the body through its marvelous action in the venous structure. It relieves cramping or pain throughout the system. It reduces inflammation and reduces hemorrhoids, even when they are serious and painful. It can help cleanse the system of alcoholism and even reduce the discomfort of a hangover, or worse, the miseries of delirium tremens. It has been said to be a sure assist in cases of diphtheria, used internally and externally as a fomentation of the tincture. It has been combined with other herbs to make an excellent eyewash—though the user needs a bit of courage the first time! It will relieve a relaxed throat, toning it up immediately. If you soak the oil in cotton, you can apply it to an aching tooth, and the relief will last a long time. Sprinkle a little of the powder into your socks at night if you suffer from cold feet; your toes will be warm all night. Rub it on if you have a sprain or a backache. Drink the tea if you have problems with flatulence. The American Indians used to say you could get rid of a wart if you bound on a fresh pepper pod every day.

Cayenne is rich in Vitamins C, A, B and G. It is an excellent source of Vitamin E. In Szent-Gyorgi's Nobel Prize winning research on Vitamin C in 1937, he had been using a substance, obtained from adrenal glands, that he suspected to be Vitamin C. When he could no longer obtain this substance, on a hunch he tried to use Paprika peppers for his work, and found them a rich source of this substance, later to be called Vitamin C. Capsicum also contains Calcium, Phosphorus, and Iron.

FROM THE MEDICAL WORLD

Most medical doctors eliminate hot foods such as capsicum from the diets of ulcer patients and others with delicate digestion; as we have shown, this is directly opposite to that which is recommended by herbalists.

Their actions are influenced from medical research showing hemorrhaging occurring after introducing (mechanically) capsicum into the stomachs of persons prone to hemorrhages. Their observations are fact but tend to be inconclusive. Perhaps any substance introduced mechanically into the system could have caused hemorrhaging. From personal experience, I was very uncomfortable taking capsicum for my bleeding ulcers, but after one day of taking capsicum, in water, I never again experienced passing dark blood through my stools. Perhaps the immediate bleeding observed, by the researchers, would have been corrected through continued herb care.

FOOD AS MEDICINE

The most prominent non-medical use of Capsicum, of course, is culinary, a perfect example of the old maxim, "Let your food be your medicine and your medicine your food." In kitchens all over the world, Capsicums are used to prepare hot dishes, and are even featured as a vegetable themselves. The peppers are ground and mixed with other spices to make Chili Powder, a common seasoning almost everywhere.

If you are fortunate enough to grow or purchase your own chili peppers, you can preserve them yourself. You can pickle them as you would cucumbers, adding carrots, celery, onions or other vegetables as the Mexicans do. If you wish to can or freeze green chilies, you will need to roast and peel them. Roast them over an open flame or in a hot oven until the skins blister. Quickly put them into a plastic bag or damp cloth until the steam loosens the skins. You may then, with hands gloved in rubber gloves or well-oiled—to avoid blistering or burning—peel the peppers. Remove the seeds if desired, chop if desired, and freeze in plastic bags, well-sealed. If you wish to can them, follow directions included with your canning jars as to pressure needed in a pressure canner.

You may use green hot peppers to make your own taco or hot sauce. To two or three quarts of tomatoes, add salt and garlic pepper to taste, and two to three cups of chopped, peeled chills. Can as usual for tomatoes.

The Mexicans make a raw chili salsa, with chopped tomato, onion, garlic, and fresh chili pepper. This salsa is an excellent and garnish to any meal.

By far the easiest culinary use of Cayenne is just to sprinkle it upon your food, as you would use black pepper. Use a little at first, increasing as you become accustomed to the pungency. For everyday maintenance of good health, this is an excellent way to use Cayenne. Even children can learn to enjoy foods thus seasoned.

As for other uses, the leaves are used extensively in the Philippines as a green dye. The powder can be sprinkled in primitive living sites to drive off bugs and vermin, as they detest Cayenne, and it can also be burned to fumigate against vermin. A room thus fumigated can be opened and used fight after the treatment, as the fumes are not poisonous to humans (Levy:43).

CURRENT FINDINGS

Recent research has focused on the extraction and isolation of the constituents of Capsicum. Lee et al. devised a mass fragmentographic method for the quantitative microanalysis of Capsaicin, the major medicinal constituent of Capsicum (Journal of Chromatography, 21 July 1976). Salzer, noting that most industrially prepared quick foods are relying on seasoning extracts rather than the more easily deteriorated spices themselves, discovered that the main flavoring constituent of Capsicum is capsaicin (Critical Reviews in Science and Nutrition, 1977).

Of most interest medicinally, Frischkorn and Frischkorn researched the debilitating tropical disease, schistosomiasis, or snail fever, which is contracted through the skin by contact with snail larvae in fresh water. They estimate that up to half of the people in the third world are afflicted with this disease. Aside from chemotherapeutic treatment and water treatment, they discovered that the oil of Capsicum annum, which is high in capsaicin, kills the larvae, and that frequent ingestion of Capsicum can help treat the disease (Naturwissenschaften, September, 1978)

Of particular interest to herbalists who are interested in the reasons why Capsicum is so valuable in heart disease, Kanner et. al. analyzed Capsicum annum for tocopherol content. They found that of all the edible plants, Capsicum annum contained the most natural Vitamin E, which is in a peculiarly stable form. In fresh, ripe pepper fruits, they found 3-10 mg./100 grams, which shows that the vegetable could become a significant source of Vitamin E in the diet. Vitamin E is often used to treat heart conditions. Because there is also a goodly amount of ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) in the peppers, the two vitamins are well balanced naturally, which the authors considered a fact of great importance in nutritional and technological considerations (Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, November-December, 1979, pp. 1316-8).

DESCRIPTION

Capsicum belongs to the botanic family Solanaceae, commonly known as the Nightshade family and including potatoes, tomatoes, green peppers, eggplants, the deadly nightshade, henbane, Jimson weed, petunias, and tobacco (Heiser:1). They are not true peppers, but were misnamed by early Spanish explorers who confused their hot taste with the pepper to which they were accustomed.

Capsicum annum is a shrubby perennial plant two to six feet high. Branches are angular, usually enlarged and slightly purple at the nodes; petioles medium; peduncles slender, often in pairs, and longer than the fruit; calyx cup-shaped, clasping base of fruit which is red, ovate, and long; seeds small and flat, from ten to twenty nine. The cuticle of the pericarp is uniformly striated and in this particular is distinct from other species. The taste is pungent and the smell characteristic, though not disagreeable (Gri: 175-76).

The peppers, when dried, vary in lengths from 3/8 inch to 2 1/4 inches and in width from 3/16 to 1/2 inch. The shape is blunt and roundish at the base, tapering to a point; oblong-acuminate. The pods are shiny, flattish and somewhat wrinkled. The seeds are small, flat, reniform, and yellow.

The African varieties are smaller and more pungent than the American varieties, which are larger and more heart-shaped.

CULTIVATION AND COLLECTION

Cayenne and the other Capsicums can be cultivated just like Green Peppers. Seeds can be purchased at garden stores or through seed catalogs. You can start them under glass or in the house in mid-February if you plan to set them in late May. Feed the developing seedlings manure tea and turn them so each side gets equal sun.

When you are ready to set the plants, protect them from cutworms with a tin-can or brown-paper collar and set them three feet apart, as they grow bigger than bell peppers. Harden the plants gradually—partially shading them—for about a week, and mulch them to preserve moisture. Do not over-fertilize them, or you'll get much leaf and little fruit.

When picking chilies, use rubber gloves to protect your hands. When they are ripe, their hotness is at a peak, and further reddening will not make them hotter, but just a little sweeter. You can preserve them as described above, or string them up for drying, as is commonly done in Mexico.

PREPARATION AND USAGE

The mature pepper pods are dried carefully and are either stored whole or ground for storage. You can purchase ground Cayenne pepper and store it with eider leaves or bay leaves in it to prevent insect infestation; sometimes, if you open a can of grocery-store Cayenne, it will be infested with large worms. Dr. Christopher said it was because worms know good food when they see it! Properly stored Cayenne will keep well for about a year. To keep it longer, you can make a tincture, and it will last as long as you could wish. Dr. Christopher stored some for twenty years, and when he unpacked it, it was as good as new!

The quickest and most efficient preparation of Cayenne is the tea, mixing a teaspoonful to a tablespoonful in warm water and drinking it. Many people, not wishing to suffer the pungency of the herb, take it in capsules, and this is all right, but the herb works much more quickly if taken in tea. It is usually not made into a decoction, as the medicinal factors are lost. Another method commonly employed to cut the hot taste is to eat a spoonful of peanut butter before taking the herb, but Dr. Christopher said he thought that was just for kids!

The tincture can be applied externally or taken internally. To make it, macerate two ounces of Cayenne in one quart of 90 proof alcohol for fourteen days.

For an excellent bath to be used in cases of aches and pains, influenza, apoplexy, etc., mix teaspoonful each of Cayenne and Ginger and add to a very hot bath. This will cleanse the pores and remove toxins.

Dr. Christopher's Formulas Containing Cayenne

As we might expect, since Cayenne is a superior carrier for other herbs, many of Dr. Christopher's Combinations contain Cayenne.

- *Prospallate* - The combination used to heal and tone the prostrate and related organs.
- *Nu-Fem* - The female tonic.
- *Naturalax* - The formula to heal and tone the bowel.
- *Panc Tea* - The formula which heals the pancreas and helps in blood-sugar related diseases.

- *BP* - The formula which regulates blood pressure.
- *Herbal Composition Powder* - Used for colds, flu, and many other ailments.
- *Adrenatone* - The formula to strengthen the adrenal glands.
- *Herbal Eyebright* - The toning eyewash.
- *Yucca AR* - The arthritis and rheumatism formula.
- *Mem* - The formula to improve memory and strengthen brain functions.
- *Relax-eze Tea* - The formula to rebuild frayed nerves.
- *Professor Cayenne Penetrating Deep Heating Balm* - For minor aches and pains.
- *X-Ceptic* - The best herbal antiseptic available.
- *Professor Cayenne Hot Lemon Lip Balm* - Lip balm
- *The Antispasmodic Tincture* - A formula for coughs
- *Cayenne Extract* - A potent fourteen-day extract, is made of Japanese, African, and American peppers.

Chemical Composition of Cayenne

The laboratory, at the request of Dr. Christopher, supplied the following analysis of Cayenne: CAYENNE Capsicum minimum (SOLANACEAE) pods, berries Capsicum Frutescens

VITAMINS AND MINERALS:

Ca .26%
 p .09
 K .17
 Na tr
 Cl tr
 Mg .31
 Fe .0006
 Mn tr
 Cu tr
 Zn tr
 Carotene-various carotenoid pigment. no carotene
 A 12,137 Mg/Ib
 B-1 78
 B-2 12
 C (ascorbic acid) 493

OTHER:

albumen 2.4%
 pectin 2.33
 gums 1.3
 starch 2.0
 capsaicin .43
 capsacutin oil 16.35
 pentosans totaling 8.59 solaine
 xanthenes .82
 oleic acid
 palmitic acid 1.85
 steanc acid
 fatty acids

In addition, the reader may be interested in the following research analyzing Capsicum:

Constituents. In 1876 Thresh extracted the drug with petroleum, treated the extract with aqueous alkali, and by passing carbon dioxide through the alkaline liquid precipitated crystals of an intensely pungent compound, capsaicin. As may be inferred from the method of preparation, capsaicin is of phenolic nature. Capsaicin (Vanillyl amide of isodecenoic acid)

The pungent phenolic fraction of capsicum also contains a proportion of 6,7 - dihydrocapsaicin. The capsaicin content of fruits varies appreciably in a range up to 1.5 per cent and is much influenced by environmental conditions and age of the fruit. It occurs principally in the dissepiment of the fruits, for example, entire fruit 0.49; pericarp 0.10; dissepiment 1.79; seed 0.07. The pungency of capsicum is not destroyed by treatment with alkalis (distinction from gingerol, which also contains the vanillyl group) but is destroyed by oxidation with potassium dichromate or permanganate. Chilies also contain ascorbic acid (0.1-0.5 per cent), thiamine, red carotenoid such as capsanthin and capsorubin and fixed oil (about 4-16 percent). They yield about 20-25 per cent of alcoholic extract (capsaicin) and about 5 percent (official limit 8 percent) of ash. Hungarian capsicums or 'Paprika' are derived from a mild race of *C. annuum* and are a convenient source of ascorbic acid. According to Bennett and Kirby the pungent principle of *C. annuum* is composed of capsaicin 69 percent, dihydrocapsaicin 22 percent, nordihydrocapsaicin 7 percent, homocapsaicin 1 percent and homodihydrocapsaicin 1 percent. The presence of the three minor components was established by mass spectroscopy.

A number of colorimetric assays can be used for the quantitative determination of capsaicin (see p. 213); The B.P.C. utilizes ultraviolet absorption at 248 and 296 nm.

Biogenesis of Capsaicin.

Work by Leete and Loudon on *C. frutescens* and by Bennett and Kirby on *C. annuum* has shown that phenylalanine is incorporated into the C6-C1 vanillyl unit of capsaicin, the C-3 of phenylalanine giving the methylene group of the vanillylamine residues; the incorporation probably proceeds via cinnamic, p-coumaric, caffeic and protocatechuic acids. Tyrosine did not appear to be a probable precursor. Leete's feeding experiments with ¹⁴C have given incorporation consistent with the hypothesis that the C10 isodecanoic acid is formed from isobutyryl coenzyme A and three acetate units. (Treaxardevans).

The United States Department of Agriculture analyzed a raw chili pepper for nutritional content; their results follow.

	Immature green pods, excluding seeds	Mature Red pods, including seeds	Mature Red pods, excluding seeds	Mature red dried pods
WATER (percent)	88.8	74.3	80.3	12.6
FOOD ENERGY (calories)	37	93	65	321
PROTEIN (grams)	1.3	3.7	2.3	12.9
FAT (grams)	.2	2.3	.4	9.1
CARBOHYDRATES (grams)	9.1	18.1	15.8	59.8
FIBER	1.8	9.0	2.3	26.2
ASH (grams)	.6	1.6	1.2	7.4

CALCIUM (milligrams)	10	29	16	130
PHOSPHORUS (milligrams)	25	78	49	240
IRON (milligrams)	.7	1.2	1.4	7.8
SODIUM (milligrams)	--	--	25	373
POTASSIUM (milligrams)	--	--	564	1,201
VITAMIN A (I.U.)	770	21,600	21,600	77,000
THIAMINE (milligrams)	.09	.22	.1	.23
RIBOFLAVIN (milligrams)	.06	.36	.2	1.33
NIACIN (milligrams)	1.7	4.4	2.9	10.5
ASCORBIC ACID (milligrams)	235	369	369	12

—(U.S. Handbook No. 8, 1975)

Bibliography

Heiser, Charles B., Jr. *Nightshades*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1969.

Hutchens, Alma R. *Indian Herbology of North America*. Kumbakonam, S. India: Homeo House Press, 1970.

Grieve, M., Mrs. *A Modern Herbal*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1980.

Herbalist Magazine, Vol. I #1, March, 1979.

Johnson, Fredrick, Ed. *Water Control Systems of the Telruacor Valley*, Vol. 4. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1972.

rcli. *Common Herbs For Natural Health*. New York: Sctoken: 1976. Christopher, John R. *School of Natural Healing*. Provo, Utah, 1975.

Trease, G.E. and Evans, Charles, *Pharmacognosy*, London: Baillerie Tirdal, 1978.

Copyright 2004 The School of Natural Healing. All Rights Reserved.