

Nutritional, Medicinal and Other Merits of Moringa.

Moringa leaves are an excellent source of protein, that is to say, they contain all the essential amino-acids including the sulphur-containing ones methionine and cystine, which are often in short supply. They are also rich in vitamins A, B-complex and C as well as many minerals. They are exceptionally high in calcium and iron. Ask any Philippino if they would like to eat some Malunggay, their name for Moringa. They love the leaves and pods in their cuisine and especially served with chicken. Move over spinach because here's something rich in iron that tastes better - Moringa!

The leaves, flowers, pods, roots, bark of stems and roots, gum, seeds and oil are all used to help with a long list of ailments and health problems such as: diabetes, scurvy, intestinal worms, diarrhoea, headache, earache, toothache, skin rashes and abrasions, wounds, ulcers, bronchitis, anaemia, sore throats, rheumatism, lower back pain, liver and spleen problems, kidney pain, asthma, gout, lumbago, epilepsy, rabies, prostate and bladder problems, warts, tumours, tuberculosis and more. This sounds like a cure for everything except death. Apart from traditional medicine, clinical trials on animals have demonstrated some of these claims. In Senegal, successful human trials provide dramatic proof. Fuglie says: **"Because of Moringa's accessibility, malnourished children have recovered much more quickly than under classic treatments which obliged their parents to purchase what is, for them, expensive items like cooking oil, sugar and milk powder. All health practitioners trained during the pilot project have since abandoned the classic approach in favour of Moringa."**

At a clinic in Senegal, according to the interview held with a French nurse, as shown on Lowell's video tape, he regularly takes the flowers as a tea to effectively control his own diabetic sugar levels. He has planted the tree all around the clinic for its health benefits. In Haiti they take these flowers as a remedy for the common cold!

Just some examples from the considerable scientific research may be reassuring. Studies on the Anti-ulcer Activities of *Moringa oleifera* Leaf Extract on Gastric Ulcer Models in Rats from the Jadavpur University, Calcutta, 1995: "Significant protective actions in acetylsalicylic acid, serotonin and indomethacin induced lesions in experimental rats. A significant enhancement of the healing process in chronic gastric lesions was also observed." Studies on the Anti-inflammatory and Wound Healing Properties of *Moringa oleifera* from the Kasturba Medical College, Karnataka, India, 1993 compared with *Bilva* demonstrated that "*Moringa* and *Bilva* both showed acute anti-inflammatory action... It could be concluded that Moringa would be the better choice for promoting healing." The List of research papers and their findings is quite extensive, but these experiments are quoted only to allay cynicism, build confidence and encourage participation by serious minded people.

A hormonal Moringa growth spray improves yields in any other crop. Among other astonishing things about Moringa is a fertility factor. Cattle have markedly more twin births with Moringa in the feed. There is an aphrodisiac property in almost all parts of the plant.

Dr. J. P. Sutherland, in research conducted at the University of Leicester, U.K., concluded that: "*M. oleifera* is a truly multipurpose tree" and **"an ideal tree for inclusion within reforestation, crop diversification and poverty and hunger alleviation programmes."** As a matter of interest for IOCS members the all-year-round tropical temperatures, the abundant rainfall and the well-drained soil of the Island of Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu are ideal for commercial cultivation of Moringa.