

## GLEANINGS FROM THE LITERATURE

### Effect of Cinnamon Supplements on Type 2 Diabetes

One of the forms of treatment for Type 2 Diabetes, in addition to medication, is dietary modification. Dietary supplements are not usually recommended due to the lack of standardised formulations and also because their clinical efficacy has not been sufficiently proved.

Some research studies have shown that Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum* spp) has the ability to lower serum lipids and blood glucose and promote insulin release among other effects. Further studies carried out to confirm these findings did indeed show positive results. Cinnamon supplements significantly reduced fasting plasma glucose, although lower than that of the standard drug, metformin. Low density cholesterol and triglycerides were also reduced although again at a lower amount than conventional drugs. However, there was a high level of heterogeneity in the studies and this was attributed to the variation in age and health of patients, dosage and form of supplement used. The studies have led to the conclusion that cinnamon supplements did have a positive effect on type 2 diabetes.

*Herbal Gram, Journal of the American Botanical Council, No. 101, Feb - Apr. 2014, pp 28-29*

### Tea taste and Quality Affected by Climate Change

Recent research conducted in South Western China has shown that the phytochemicals in tea can be affected by climate changes occurring in the area. This research has a profound impact on tea drinkers as the beneficial health effects attributed to tea can be adversely affected. This is particularly so in the case of green tea, where the health benefits have come to be accepted as being proven. The research also has implications for other medicinal plants and their compounds as the nutritional and medicinal values are liable to change according to the weather, and thus their efficacy will be subject to changing climates.

During the study, discussions with tea farmer were also held, and these have brought to light findings which further confirmed the research. The farmers assert that changing weather patterns change the quality and taste of their crop. During the dry season, the leaves are said to be more potent and have a strong flavour, while during the monsoons, the leaves have a gentler aroma and taste. Through studies conducted with samples of tea extracts obtained from Chinese farms, it was shown that tea catechins which are the key health giving compounds from tea, can decrease by almost 50% when the leaves are harvested after the monsoons when compared to leaves harvested after the drought. These findings are consistent with the observations of the farmers as far as taste and flavour is concerned. This research could have far reaching implications in the future in many areas.

*Herbal Gram, Journal of the American Botanical Council, No. 103, 2014, pp 44-51*