

# Vitality in passion and gooseberries

**A**s village boys tending cows and goats in fern-filled bushes of the village, nothing excited us more than finding a wild passion bush thicket that had not been spotted by other boys. The ripe ones would fill our small food bags as polythene bags were unknown in those days and the unripe ones became good balls played along dusty village paths. Little did we know we were lining our stomachs with vital nutrients that protected us from disease and malnourishment. Gooseberries were also plentifully found in the village thickets and were popular with the boys.

The passion fruit, with its acidic flavour, contains minerals magnesium, calcium, phosphorus and potassium in significant quantities.

It has 30mg of vitamin C per 100gms of pulp and also vitamins A, B2, B6, E, niacin and folic acid. Having 2.2 percent of proteins makes it one of the most protein-rich fruits. With 13 percent of it being sugars glucose, fructose, and saccharose in equal amounts, it invigorates when taken as a juice.

Levels of iron stands out and at 1.6mg per 100gms of pulp, it is the most iron-rich fresh fruit followed by lemon (0.6mg) and cherimoya (0.5mg). It even surpasses eggs (1.4mg) and closely approaches the meat iron content (2mg/100gms). Presence of vitamin C greatly increases the absorption of iron in passion fruit.

Passion fruit pulp is one of the richest vegetable products in soluble fibre (pectin and mucilage) which when com-

## GOOD LIVING

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pared to the insoluble fibre of grain bran does not contain phytic acid and thus does not interfere with iron absorption.

In a study done in 1989 study beta by D:L Davies it was shown that the passion fruit contains aromatic non-nutritive substances which give it sedative actions. Those wishing to relax the nervous system need to take the pulp and juice freshly made from ripe passion fruit.

The juice of passion is refreshing and stimulates the digestive function of the intestines. The gelatinous pulp, with its high fibre contents exercises mild laxative effect on the gut making passion fruit useful in case of constipation. The high levels of iron make the juice of this important fruit useful in iron deficiency anaemia.

For those who have over-indulged on excess roast meat, the presence of organic acids

in the passion, which conversely increases the alkalinity of blood, would benefit from passion fruit juice to reduce the incidence of gouty arthritis.

It is not for nothing that the global demand for this tropical fruit is increasing. The yellow passion fruit is appreciated for its delicate flavour. It is useful for relieving tension headache, and mental fatigue making it an excellent evening drink.

The gooseberry is a good source of soluble fibre and very useful for diabetics because of its low calorie levels. It has high levels of potassium (190mg/100gms) making it useful in the control of high blood pressure. Though not really a berry despite its name but a member of the tomato family, its high levels of  $\beta$ -carotene and vitamin C (60mg/100gms) promotes a strong immune system. The village forest is no more.

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