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By Michael Barker

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Blueberries 'help people age better'

A series of articles in The Journal of Gerontology outline how blueberries can help alleviate conditions associated with ageing



Blueberries can help relieve age-related conditions, a new series of articles has indicated.

According to a collection of articles published in The Journal of Gerontology, blueberries can help people to age well as they rank as one of the best fruits for their antioxidant activity. The studies show that consuming blueberries has been linked to reducing oxidative stress, a process strongly linked to ageing-related diseases.

The new articles are based on findings from the earlier San Francisco Symposium, focusing on blueberries for successful ageing.

As people get older, the risk of certain age-related diseases rises. These include Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, cancer, cardiovascular disease, cataracts, hypertension and type-2 diabetes.

The research in The Journal of Gerontology indicate a number of ways blueberries can help, including the fact that they have been found to have 'anti-inflammatory' mechanisms that can help promote healthy ageing.

Emerging clinical trials also suggest that blueberry-supplemented diets could improve flow-mediated dilation (arterial blood flow) which appears to be attributed to blueberry anthocyanins that give them their distinct colour.

Other research suggests that blueberries could benefit memory in older populations, possibly due to their polyphenol profile, though further work is needed in that area.

The news comes against the background of an ageing population. In 2015 there were 901 million people aged 60 years and over globally, and by 2050 this is predicted to surge to 2.1 billion - one-fifth of the global population.

The British blueberry season is now in full swing, with shoppers spending just over £400m on blueberries in the UK. More than 41,000 tonnes of blueberries were sold in the 52 weeks up to 17th June 2019 [Kantar].

Dr Emma Derbyshire, public health nutritionist and adviser to British

Summer Fruits, said: "This is a very interesting collection of work. We know that blueberries are mini-nutritional powerhouses providing vitamin C, calcium, potassium, magnesium, folate and manganese, as well as anthocyanins and a diverse range of polyphenolic compounds such as quercetin, so it makes good sense to eat them regularly as we age.

"Since the 1990s, research relating to blueberries and their health benefits has grown exponentially."

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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