

Acerola

Scientific name: *Malpighia glabra* Linné

Family: Malpighiaceae

Popular names: Acerola, antilles cherry, barbados cherry, cereso, cerezo, escobillo, health tree, huesito, puerto rican cherry, west indian cherry.

Used parts: Fruit.

Botanical characteristics: Acerola is a small tree or shrub that grows up to 3-6 m high in the dry, deciduous forest. It produces an abundance of bright red fruit 1 to 2 cm in diameter, with several small seeds that look similar to the European cherry. Acerola leaves are dark to light green, glossy when mature, obviate to lanceolate, with minute hairs, which can be irritating.

Habitat: *Malpighia glabra* is a shrub native to the West Indies, it also grows in Central and South America.

Chemical composition: ascorbic acid, mineral salts, proteins, carbohydrates, mucilage, rutine, hesperidine, karoten, tiamin, riboflavin and niacin.

Free volatile compounds: the volatile fraction was constituted of nine alcohols, 21 esters, seven aromatic compounds, two terpenic compounds, two norisoprenoids, three acids and two lactones. The most abundant compounds were the aliphatic alcohols. Among them, 3-methyl-but-3-en-1-ol-, 3-methyl-butan-1-ol and 2-methyl-butan-1-ol were predominant⁽²⁾. The glycosidically-bound fraction was composed of aliphatic alcohols, as observed in the volatile fraction, and norisoprenoids

Indications: acerola has been used as a remedy against flus and colds, pulmonary disturbance, liver ailments and irregularities of the gall bladder. Used in heavy dose, it has beneficial effects on viral hepatitis, varicella as well as poliomyelitis. Acerola has also shown active anti-fungal properties.

Dose:

Outside use:

- Shampoo: 2 to 5 %
- Creams and lotions: 5 to 10 %

Others informations:

- The pulp is very juicy and cooling and possesses a fruity and sweet flavour but the fruit is principally known for its amount of Vitamin C, varying between 1000 and 4500 mg/100g of pulp, one of the most important natural sources.
- Caceres, Lopez, Juarez Del Aguila, and Garcia (1993) evaluated its antifungal activity for the treatment of dermatophytic infections.
- The potential aroma, constituted by glycosidically-bound aroma compounds, has been reported in many fruits, including tropical fruits.

Contraindications: A study published in 2002 reported that acerola evidenced similar allergic reactivity to that of a well-known allergen, latex. Those who may be allergic to latex may also be allergic to acerola in supplement form or to its addition in various fruit juices.

References:

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