

Did You Know?



Cranberry *Vaccinium macrocarpon*

- Cranberries grow on low bushes or vines in acidic bogs. The species *V. macrocarpon* is native to North America.
- The bogs are often flooded for wet harvesting. In the winter, water in the fields is also used to control insects and to protect the plants from frost and drying winter winds. Growers also use a practice called ice sanding. In winter or spring, clean sand is spread to stimulate vine growth and manage weed and fungal growth as well as insect eggs and over-wintering insect pests. This practice dates back to the beginning of the cranberry industry, 1816.
- About 10% of cranberries harvested in dry fields in Massachusetts and these are sold as fresh fruit. The cranberries harvested wet are used to make cranberry products such as juice, sauce and dried cranberries.
- The origin of the name is traced back to the Pilgrims who called them “craneberry” because of the reflexed petals of the small pink flowers with the exposed resembles the head and bill of the Sandhill crane.
- Historically, the fruit of the cranberry plant has been used for bladder, stomach, and liver disorders. It also has been used in diabetes, wound and skin care as well as other conditions.
- Wampanoag People across Massachusetts used cranberries for fabric dye, to treat wounds, fevers, swelling, seasickness and to prevent certain illnesses,
- Proanthocyanidins (PACs) are bioactive compounds in cranberries that are linked to a number of health benefits, including: reducing certain infections, promoting heart health, protecting the urinary tract, decreasing inflammation associated with chronic disease and aging and supporting digestive health, according to the according to the Cape Cod Cranberry Grower’s Association.
- Studies suggest that in healthy people who are at an increased risk for urinary tract infections (UTI), cranberry products decrease the risk of UTI’s. However, studies have shown that the cranberry is not an effective treatment for a UTI.
- Research is being done on the phytochemical and antioxidant attributes of cranberries and their benefit to gut health and disease prevention. A review of cranberries and health research studies can be found at The Cranberry Institute, cranberryinstitute.org.

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