

Scientists have discovered that beetroot has a remarkable effect on lowering blood pressure. Maria Fitzpatrick tries a medically approved new juice

Have you ever considered swapping your morning glass of fresh orange for freshly squeezed beetroot? Thought not - but in light of a remarkable discovery, it may be worth downing the inky, purple-red stuff with your cornflakes. And, thanks to the launch this month of a scrumptious new juice, getting your daily dose won't require a pinch of the nose or scrubbing stubborn, deep purple stains off your chopping board.

Earlier this year, scientists at Barts and the London School of Medicine found that beetroot juice can have as great an effect on blood pressure as conventional drugs.

Led by Professor Amrita Ahluwalia of the William Harvey Research Institute - the renowned pharmacology centre that discovered how aspirin can prevent heart attacks and strokes - the research team found that just three hours after drinking 500ml of the juice (the equivalent of eating five medium-sized beetroots) there was a significant decrease in volunteers' blood pressure. The remarkable effects were still noticeable 24 hours later.

That such an inexpensive and bounteous vegetable may lower blood pressure makes beetroot worthy of its new-found status as the first "super-root". However, the woody consistency, off-putting earthy aroma and overly sweet taste (delete as applicable), of its raw juice have long prevented more of us taking a slug - which is a shame, given that one in three adults in the UK now suffers from hypertension and could benefit from a regular 250ml dose, the equivalent of an average glass.

According to the Blood Pressure Association, a third of sufferers don't even realise they have the condition, which results in an estimated 350 "preventable" strokes or heart attacks every day.

So how does beetroot work in the body? Like other superfoods, it has antioxidants in abundance, and is rich in iron, boron and folic acid. Betanene, which gives it its deep colour, is even more potent an antioxidant than polyphenols, the plant chemicals thought to be a key reason for people whose diets are rich in leafy vegetables having lower blood pressure.

But, says Professor Ben Benjamin, a consultant in Acute Medicine at the Peninsula Medical School in Plymouth and member of the research team, it is beetroot's capacity to absorb and store exceptionally high levels of nitrate that earns it the super-root title. Nitrates are nutrients found in soil which all plants need to build protein, and which the body harnesses in its battle against blood pressure.

"When nitrate is present in high concentration in saliva, bacteria on the tongue converts it into a more reactive chemical, nitrite," Prof Benjamin explains. "When the nitrite



Beetroot reduces blood pressure

Beauty of the BEETROOT

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is swallowed, it is easily converted into nitric oxide, a chemical which is continually produced by our blood vessels to make them relax and hence keep blood pressure low. So dramatically increasing the levels of nitrate with beetroot juice increases this effect."

Along with its anti-hypertensive effects, the study also found that the high levels of nitrates in beetroot

juice work like aspirin does to prevent blood clots, and help to protect the lining of the blood vessels.

So encouraged were researchers by the magnitude of the blood pressure effect that they approached a Suffolk-based natural drinks company to produce a bottled beetroot juice that would make it easy for people to introduce the root into their diet.

The resulting juice, HeartBeet, is

certainly palatable, and definitely good for you. A "no bits" blend of crushed organic roots, with a touch of apple juice (10 per cent) to balance out the taste, it is now on sale in selected Holland & Barrett stores. Unlike other juices already available, seven per cent of its proceeds will go directly back into funding cardiovascular research.

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"Currently, treatment for high blood pressure involves a cocktail of aspirin, statins, beta blockers, and angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors. Many people really don't like taking all the tablets, especially since they often don't feel unwell, and the treatment is essentially lifelong."

One patient with high blood pressure, 60-year-old David Kelsall from Stoke-on-Trent, is already reaping the rewards of drinking a glass of beetroot juice a day. "I discovered that my blood pressure was higher than normal when my doctor was testing for something else," he says. "It was 165/90mmHg - not life-threateningly serious, but none the less I was anxious to do something about it."

Before committing to medication, he decided to give beetroot juice a try. "I drank three bottles of liquidised beetroot a week. Less than four weeks after the first test, I had my blood pressure taken again, and it had already levelled out to 150/90mmHg." (A normal blood pressure reading would be in the range of 120/80mmHg.) "Now, a few months later, it is under control and normal. I am still drinking the juice, and I'm going to continue doing so. It may not help everyone, but it's helped me."

A growing body of research around the world suggests that the crucial nitrates in beetroot may also contribute to protecting us against other diseases, including infections and stomach ulcers - yet more reason to drink up. Having established a connection with blood pressure, scientists are now assessing just how much - or, rather, how little - of the juice is required for it to be effective.

If nothing else, beetroot's health credentials give us all a reason to be smug: for once, the British country garden has come up with a foodstuff that trumps those in the Mediterranean "wonder diet". And right now is the perfect time to grow your own. Beetroot seeds won't germinate in temperatures below 7°C, or when there's any inkling of ground frost, so early- to mid-summer is ideal to start planting. It can take as little as 10 weeks for a crop to mature, so you could be serving beetroot juice at your final summer barbecue of the year. We should all drink to that!

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Colombo Philharmonic Choir

La Joie de La Musique

An Evening of Music presented by the Colombo Philharmonic Choir

The Colombo Philharmonic Choir conducted by Manilal Weerakoon will present "La Joie de La Musique" at the Russian Centre on Saturday 12th July at 7.00 pm. This programme of choral music includes delightful lyrics, excerpts from operas, a cantata, a motet and a traditional melody. The lyrics dwell on themes such as love, both playfully elusive and doomed, the serenity of evening, the exotic life of gypsies, pastoral scenes from the countryside, and episodes from legend and mythology.

The composers, whose works have been selected, include Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Gioachino Rossini (a rousing chorus from his opera 'Semiramide'), Felix Mendelssohn, G.F. Handel, Johannes Brahms, Claude Debussy and Camille Saint-Saens.

The selection presents, varying moods ranging from the delightfully playful and light-hearted to the tragic beauty of a human, who being threatened and oppressed by the wickedness of his fellow beings, seeks the wings of a dove to soar high and rove far away in pursuit of rest in the wilderness. The songs though conforming to the principles of restrained emotion and the discipline of form that feature classical music, are marked by lively melodies that would appeal to music lovers.

Radhika Abeynaik will provide the accompaniment on the piano

The soloists in concert will be Minoli Goonewardene (Soprano) and Sanjeev Niles (Baritone).

ETV	
A.M.	
06.00	Prime Time Morning
06.55	Lanka Business Online
07.01	Chanel News Asia
10.00	Telemarketing
10.30	Chanel News Asia
11.00	Telemarketing
Noon	
12.00	YA TV
P.M.	
12.30	Telemarketing
01.00	VH1
02.00	Chanel News Asia
03.00	Telemarketing
03.30	Chanel News Asia

ITN	
A.M.	
04.30	Station Opening
04.35	Pirith Deshanaya
04.42	Jayamangala Gatha
04.46	Davase Sithuvili
05.00	Thakshilawa
06.00	ITN Puwath
06.15	Davase Pathihara
06.55	Jeevithaya Jayaganna
07.00	Hathveni Peiya
08.00	Peiyen Peya Puwath
08.05	Pahan Dora Magazine
08.30	Vaidya Sayanaya
09.00	Peiyen Peya Puwath
09.05	Salmal Yaya
10.00	Peiyen Peya Puwath
10.05	Nimthera
11.00	Discussion
11.30	Quantum Tele Shopping
Noon	
12.00	Noon News Bulletin
P.M.	
12.30	Tele Drama
01.00	Two in One
01.30	Hedakara Hendewa
02.00	Peiyen Peya Puwath
02.03	Hedakara Hendewa - Contd.
02.30	Thunveni Seenuwa
03.00	Peiyen Peya Puwath



That 70's Show - Bye-Bye Basement. Monday at 8.00 p.m. on ETV.

CHANNEL EYE	
A.M.	
06.29	Station Opening
06.30	Talk for the Day
06.45	Classical Songs
07.00	Sampath Rekha
07.15	Development Lottery
07.30	Naledugall Intru
08.00	Sathurangam
08.30	Kalal Wanakkam
09.00	Uday Darshanam
11.00	Kanar Kanum Kalangal
11.30	Golden Comedy
Noon	
12.00	Lunch Time Music
P.M.	
01.00	En Thozhi En Kathail En Manalval

SIRASA TV	
A.M.	
04.00	Pirith & Jayamangala Gatha
04.30	Mahamakuwa
05.00	Bana
05.30	Cartoon
06.00	English Lesson
06.30	News First
07.00	News - English
07.30	Cartoon
08.00	Jeevithayala Ida Denna
10.30	Game Show
Noon	
12.00	Lunch Time News
P.M.	
12.15	Lunch Time TV
01.00	Nonawaruni Mahatwaruni
01.30	Sinhala Movie
04.00	Cartoon

MTV	
A.M.	
05.25	Station Opening
05.30	Voice of America
06.30	News First
07.00	Good Morning Sri Lanka
08.00	Fox News
P.M.	
12.30	News
12.45	VOA
01.15	Fly Tales
01.30	Fox News

DERANA	
A.M.	
05.55	Station Opening
06.00	Cartoon
07.00	Derana Aruna
08.00	Suba Dawasak
08.30	Eka Dawasak Ude
10.30	Duvill Maliga
11.00	Sihil Sulan Ralle
P.M.	
12.00	Ada Derana
12.15	Sinhala Songs
12.30	Salhulu Wila
01.30	Mix Songs



The Bold & The Beautiful Monday to Wednesday at 9.00 p.m. and Sunday at 1.00 p.m. on ETV

MTV	
A.M.	
04.30	Angela Anaconda
05.00	Inspector Gadget
05.30	Thunder Cats
06.00	Enter 10 Music
07.00	Fox News
08.30	All Starz
09.00	Channel 1 News
09.30	All Starz
10.00	Jake in Progress
10.30	Top Story
10.32	IPL Cricket HIL



Everwood - Tuesday at 8.00 p.m. on ETV.

SHAKTHI TV	
A.M.	
06.00	Breakfast News
06.15	Filler
06.30	Good Morning Sri Lanka
06.45	Newspaper Today
07.00	Good Morning Sri Lanka
08.30	Kondattam
09.00	Thairai Vaanam
09.30	Thirai Cholai
10.00	Nimmathi
10.30	Pukundha Veedu Porandha Veedu
11.00	Anandam
11.30	Kasturi
Noon	
12.00	Penmanikkaga
P.M.	
12.30	Pennagal Neram

SWARNAVAHINI	
A.M.	
06.00	Ehi Passiko
06.30	Mul Pituwa
07.00	Loka Siliyama
07.30	Mobi Dick
08.00	Hello Sri Lanka
10.30	Ea Heenayaya Awasaral
11.00	Mahajana Sewaya Pinalal
Noon	
12.00	Live @ 12
P.M.	
12.30	Tele Comi
01.00	Hada Rendil Peya
02.00	Pini Kunatuwa

ART TV	
A.M.	
06.30	World Business Today
07.00	The State of Business
07.15	Life Line
07.30	Anderson Cooper 360
08.30	World News
09.00	World Sport
09.30	Quantum Tele Shopping
09.57	State of Business (3 min)
10.00	Telescreen Marketing
10.30	CNN Today
10.57	State of Business (3 min)
11.00	CNN Today
11.57	State of Business (3 min)
Noon	
12.00	Telescreen Marketing
P.M.	
12.30	Business International
12.57	State of Business (3 min)
01.00	Quantum Tele Shopping
01.30	World News
01.57	State of Business (3 min)
02.00	World Sport

RUPAVAHINI	
A.M.	
05.18	Station Opening
05.20	Homage to the Triple Gem & Karaniya Metta Sutta
05.30	Siri Sadaham Maga
05.55	Dina Asriya
06.00	News
06.05	Deshabhimani Gi
06.08	Sivudesa
06.30	Pathihara Sirasithala
07.00	News
07.05	Aadaraneyaya Yavunayaya
08.00	News
08.05	Nuga Sevana
09.00	News
09.05	Nuga Sevana
10.00	News
10.05	Nuga Sevana
11.00	News
11.05	Aluth Sri Lankawak
Noon	
12.00	Siri Siri Mal
P.M.	
12.30	News
01.00	Hiru Viyana
02.00	News
02.05	A Documentary
03.00	News