

Guarana

Botanical Name:

Paullinia cupana, *Paullinia sorbilis*

Common Names:

Brazilian cocoa, guarana gum, guarana paste, zoom

Parts used:

Seeds

Active Components:

Caffeine

Looks like:

Guaraná plant is a woody vine that climbs the trees, reaching 10 meters in height. Thus, when cultivated in the open, it adopts a shrubby habit, growing to a maximum 2 to 3 meters in height. It bears orange-yellow fruit containing up to three seeds each.



Where it's grown:

The plant is indigenous to the Amazon basin and has been introduced into other rain forests. The main area of cultivation is between Maues and Manau in Brazil.

History:

The Guarinís in Brazilia would make tea by shelling and washing the seeds, followed by pounding them into a fine powder. The powder is kneaded into a dough and then shaped into cylinders. This product is known as guarana bread or Brazilian cocoa, which would be grated and then immersed into hot water along with sugar. This plant was introduced to western civilization in the 17th century following its discovery by Father Felip Betendorf. By 1958, guarana was commercialized.

Use:

Orally, guarana is used for weight loss, to enhance athletic performance, and to reduce fatigue. In folk medicine, guarana is used as a stimulant, tonic, aphrodisiac, and astringent. It is also used orally to prevent malaria and dysentery, and for chronic diarrhea, fever, heart problems, headache, rheumatism, lumbago, and heat stress. In good manufacturing, guarana has been used as a flavoring ingredient in beverages and candy.

