

SUCCULENT SEAWEED

NUTRITION

CANDIDA

Frances Dale talks to Simon Ranger of Seagreens about Arctic wrack

Did you know that Galapagos lizards and our own Ramsay sheep live on a diet of nothing but seaweed? And in the Lofoten islands, where the Seagreens' whistle wrack (*ascophyllum*), spiral wrack (*fucus*) and channel wrack (*pelvetia*) are harvested, young wild elk walk miles down the mountains to eat it - even in mid-summer.

NUTRIENT DENSITY

Sea vegetables have long been known to be highly nutritious. However, the brown Arctic algae seem to be particularly nutrient dense - possibly because of their growing conditions. Unlike the deep water kelps they are shallow water weeds so are subject to intense photosynthesis (24 hour sunshine during the summer months), extreme cold in the winter and the annual 'culling' of old seaweeds by the winter storms.

But whatever the reason Arctic seaweed has more iron than dulse, the common red seaweed, which in turn has 200 times more iron than the richest land-grown green, beet greens. It also has eight times more magnesium and 100 times more iodine than any land vegetable and 14 times more calcium than cow's milk. However, it is arguable that it is not only the quantity of each nutrient in the Arctic wrack that is important, but that they are ideally balanced for human consumption - unlike some of the other seaweeds, such as kelp, which has too high an iodine content to be used on a regular basis.

MULTI-PURPOSE POLYSACCHARIDES

Arctic wrack also contains a range of multi-purpose polysaccharides, including mannuric acid, laminarin and fucoidin. They are known to improve the condition of the gut wall and encourage good gut bacteria. Fucus, in particular, can act on *Helicobacter Pylori* (the most common cause of gastritis and peptic ulcer) to prevent it attaching itself to the gut wall.

They can also detoxify the system by 'binding to' and removing heavy metals like barium, cadmium, lead and mercury.

CANDIDIASIS

The polysaccharides also seem useful in treating candida. Their natural antibacterial and antibiotic properties seem to be effective against the fungus while their rich iodine content is used by enzymes to produce iodine-charged free radicals which deactivate yeasts. (Before the arrival of antifungal drugs iodine was the standard medical treatment for yeasts.)

And yet more... They appear to have roles in the treatment of cancer, the herpes simplex, herpes zoster and Epstein Barr viruses - and might even be effective against the AIDs/HIV viruses!

ALLERGEN-FREE NUTRITION

Meanwhile... for readers with multiple food intolerances who struggle to find ways of keeping up their nutritional profile, a seaweed supplement could be a good option. Seagreens say that since they first started processing and selling their wracks in 1998 they have not had a single case of intolerance or biological rejection reported to them. The wracks are also, of course, free of gluten, dairy and all of the common allergens.

If you want to know more about the nutritional profile of seaweeds, and the Arctic wracks in particular, Simon Ranger can point you to over 100 references in his handbook for healthcare practitioners. He can also offer you a range of ways in which to imbibe your Arctic wrack - as granules, capsules or as a 'culinary ingredient' - an excellent alternative to salt for those trying to reduce their salt intake - and for those who just like the taste!

**You can contact him on 01444 400403
www.seagreens.com**



Wild Wrack seaweeds. Fucus is the long one growing across the water from right to left. Pelvetia is the short dark one under the water in the bottom.