



Nature's super foods

The term superfood has become a bit of a buzzword over the last few years but what does it actually mean and what constitutes a superfood?

**Stephan Smits,
General Manager,
Rio Trading.**

✿ Rio Trading was founded in 1986 with the aim of sharing the benefits of South American herbs, after its founders Graeme Lewis, Denise Sheldon and Ben Nash experienced the effects while living in Brazil. Rio Trading is the UK distributor of, among others, Green Magma Organic Green Barley Juice extract.

There is a high level awareness of popular superfoods, but also some confusion among the general public due to overuse of the term.

Often the term 'superfood' is considered a marketing tool and as such, it is not recognised by many dieticians, for example. However, the term is still commonly used to distinguish foods with a very high content of phytonutrients, including vitamins, minerals and antioxidant compounds in particular.

For us, it really has to have a higher nutrient profile than any other readily available product on the market, or a very broad spectrum.

As we specialise in supplements from South America, many of our products fall in this category but we prefer to point out a specific benefit of the product to make them distinguishable and users can immediately understand the benefits of a particular 'superfruit', for instance.

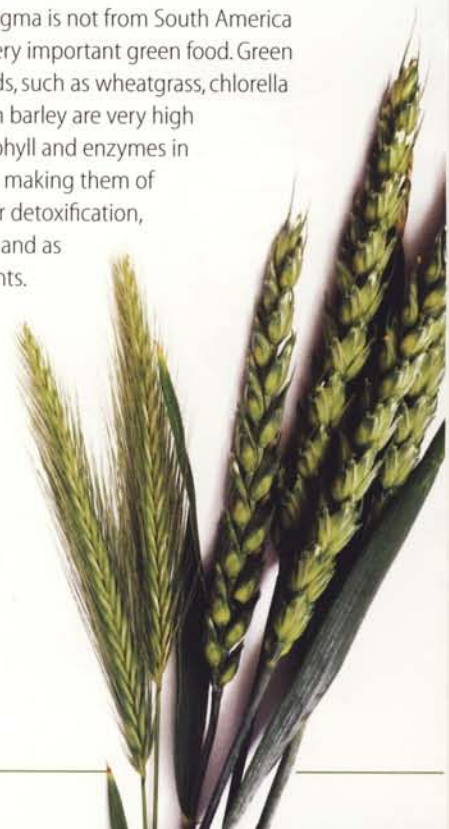
There is definite interest in our superfoods, especially since it is becoming more known that these products are available.

However, we try not to overuse this term and focus on the particular benefits of açai, for instance. The most important South American superfoods Rio Trading sells are açai, a deep purple fruit from the Amazon rainforest, which, like red wine grapes and blueberries, is very high in antioxidant anthocyanins, making it a 'super antioxidant.' Maca is a root that is cultivated in the

Peruvian Andes that is very high in minerals, amino acids and also provides many other nutrients and actives.

Greens are an important class of foods.

Green Magma is not from South America but is a very important green food. Green superfoods, such as wheatgrass, chlorella and green barley are very high in chlorophyll and enzymes in particular, making them of benefit for detoxification, digestion and as antioxidants.



Joanne Hayden,
Marketing Manager - Linwoods Foods,
Head of Sales - Linwoods Health Foods.

✿ **Linwoods has been in business for over 30 years, manufacturing a range of bakery, fresh dairy and healthy superfood products.**

A superfood can constitute a natural food which delivers high quantities of vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids to your diet.

Awareness of superfoods is growing. The FSA [Food Standards Agency] has recognised that the term has been overused recently and is set to publish guidelines on its correct use shortly. These should help to regulate the industry and ensure only superfoods with genuine

health benefits are recognised.

The UK is performing strongly in 2009 for Linwoods, with over 50 per cent increase from the first quarter this year versus the first quarter of the previous year.

Sales continue to strengthen in 2009, with an 89 per cent increase in sales in March versus January 2009.

The success of the products in the health food sector has created a growing demand for them.

Linwoods Healthy Superfoods are a unique

range of milled and blended seeds and berries that provide an easy way to introduce, on a daily basis, all the nutrients, vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids needed to support a well balanced and active lifestyle. Five of the Linwoods products are blended. This refers to the unique combination of different seeds and berries to create different combinations of health benefits. Each variant provides a unique range of vitamins and minerals and delivers specific health benefits, for example flaxseed high in omega 3, hemp seeds high in protein, magnesium and iron, goji berries are a complete protein, sunflower and pumpkin seeds high in vitamin E, sesame seeds high in calcium.

Sally Hesmondhalgh,
Manager,
l'Age Vert.

✿ **l'Age Vert started life in 1997 with the launch of a chlorella product and since then, the company's portfolio has grown to 50, including guarana and odontella.**

A superfood is a food that contains a mass of vitamins, minerals and proteins, which would help someone who is lacking in one of those substances.

To me, Chlorella is THE superfood; there's so much research behind it, I really believe it is the total superfood.

Chlorella has four times the chlorophyll that spirulina has and contains a natural growth hormone, which is a cellular regenerator.

This growth hormone also seems to be very important to older people and they notice the difference in terms of energy and generally feeling good about life.

I think in Britain we have missed the boat on chlorella.

In France, it's hugely popular but in Britain we have moved onto other things such as goji. I think retailers need to talk to their customers about all the research on chlorella because there is a job to be done in educating people about the evidence.

Simon Ranger,
Managing Director,
Seagreens.

✿ **For 10 years, Seagreens has specialised in making seaweed products using sustainable wild harvesting. The company has both its own-label brand and provides ingredients for the likes of Pukka Herbs.**

I think the word superfood is overused but it is meant to identify a natural food which can make some really distinctive contribution to nutritional balance or therapy.

There are some strongly promoted 'superfoods' from açai berries to spirulina and perhaps this helps stimulate interest in the special qualities of food. Equally, people can gain huge benefit from a broad understanding of the health benefits and nutritional values of everyday natural foods.

It is encouraging to see the swell of interest from schools to nutritional therapy.

There are so many remarkable foods, from apples and broccoli to seaweed and yams, but among the most remarkable and least known for daily use is the genuine ocean algae – especially wild 'bladderwrack' seaweeds – which can be cut, clean and tangy, around our own remote Atlantic shores. The shallow water wrack seaweeds, with names like Ascophyllum, Fucus and Pelvetia, have a radically different and very comprehensive composition compared



to foods from the land. This is because the ocean remains a vast primal 'soup' of all the world's nutrients, and there is virtually no nutritional gap that the wrack seaweeds won't fill. In addition to balancing the nutritional profile, they are reputed to assist nutrient absorption and metabolism, support gut and bowel health, the lymphatic and endocrine systems, including the thyroid, strengthen immunity, bind and remove toxic metals, help stabilise the acid-alkaline balance, and improve dry skin, listless hair and poor circulation. All of this is known from scientific research and, more recently, clinical experience.

We are trying to make it easy to include seaweed in the daily diet and the idea seems to be gaining ground.

This year we have seen no drop in consumer demand and our certified ingredients can now be found in other products like Pukka's new range of organic bio nutrients, which I am delighted to see are not described as 'superfoods' but are 'nutritionally rich foods for everyday health'.