



**For Immediate Release
February 28, 2012**

**Contact: Thom Householder, Front Burner PR
(207) 653-6122, thom@frontburnerpr.com**

WILD BLUEBERRIES – BRAIN FOOD FOR BOOMERS?

Portland, Maine – Could the antioxidants in Wild Blueberries help protect your brain against memory loss? Today, a growing body of research is focused on the potential of this tasty little superfruit to confer a wide range of possible brain health benefits. Areas of study include memory loss, Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of cognitive impairment—areas of intense interest to the millions of baby boomers who are now reaching retirement age.

Wild Blueberry researchers began seeing positive results with in-vitro and animal studies more than a decade ago and are now conducting human clinical trials to investigate the impacts of a diet rich in this recognized antioxidant powerhouse.

Your Brain on Wild Blueberries

According to Susan Davis, MS, RD, nutrition advisor to the Wild Blueberry Association of North America, “New research is really bearing out the idea that a diet rich in Wild Blueberries may help prevent cognitive decline.”

- ✦ For example, in the first human study of its kind, a team led by Dr. Robert Krikorian at the University of Cincinnati confirmed that Wild Blueberry supplemented diets improved memory function and mood in older adults with early memory decline.¹

“Our preliminary memory findings are encouraging and suggest that supplementing one’s diet with blueberries may help forestall cognitive aging,” said Krikorian.

- ✦ A study released last year by David Malin and scientists at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University demonstrated the prompt and powerful effect of a short-term blueberry-enriched diet on aged lab animals. This built upon previous work showing positive results from longer-term blueberry feeding. The new study suggests that even a brief period of blueberry-enriched feeding may prevent and reverse a considerable degree of age-related object memory decline.²

- more -

- ^ A team lead by Dr. Shibu Poulose at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging also found that extracts from blueberries and other deeply colored berries enable “housekeeper” cells in the brain to remove biochemical debris, which is believed to contribute to the decline of mental functioning with age.³

More on the Horizon

Studies currently in the works promise more exciting implications for human cognitive health.

- ^ Dr. Carol Cheatham at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is studying the effect of blueberry consumption on cognition in elderly subjects who are experiencing mild cognitive impairment.
- ^ Rolf Martin, PhD, has been measuring cognitive improvements in a group of older subjects who have been eating frozen Wild Blueberries five days a week for 10 years. An upcoming study will determine whether hearing acuity, image recognition and spatial memory improve with regular blueberry or vitamin C consumption.
- ^ Dr. Ana Rodriguez Mateos at the University of Reading is investigating the cognitive effects of different doses of blueberries on children.

No wonder *AARP The Magazine* named Wild Blueberries to its list of the most powerful disease-fighting foods.

Antioxidants: Wild Blueberries are ORAC Leaders

Wild Blueberries are packed with natural pigments called *anthocyanins*, which give the berries their deep-blue color as well as their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory power. In fact, Wild Blueberries score higher than many other fruits and vegetables in total antioxidant capacity as measured by ORAC (Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity), the most highly recognized measure of antioxidant capacity.

According to the most recent ORAC study released in 2010, Wild Blueberries score twice as high in antioxidant capacity per serving as cultivated blueberries⁴, making them a great antioxidant choice for brain protection.

Antioxidants work in the body to reduce “oxidative stress,” or cell damage that is linked to chronic diseases and aging. By neutralizing free radicals, or unstable oxygen molecules, antioxidants are thought to help prevent or reduce the risk of a wide range of diseases, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of cognitive impairment.

The Natural Protection of “Wild”

What makes Wild Blueberries such formidable brain health heroes? In contrast to larger, cultivated berries, the Wild ones are actually hundreds of different low-bush varieties that occur naturally in the coastal fields and barrens of Maine and Canada.

- more -

According to researcher Dr. Mary Ann Lila, director of the Plants for Human Health Institute at the University of North Carolina, these wild berries have thrived for more than 10,000 years precisely because of their higher concentration of *anthocyanin*. The harsher the environment, the more potent the protection, for both the wild berries and the berry eaters.

Dr. Lila explains, "Because they are so rich in health-protective compounds, I like to say that wild plants are "stressed for success."

Brain Berries Year-Round

For baby boomers—or anyone looking for a way to help keep their brain healthy—Wild Blueberries are the smart choice. The little berries freeze particularly well, with nutrition and quality intact, and are available in the supermarket frozen-fruit aisle year-round. So it's easy to have a ready source of "brain food" in the freezer.

Nutritionist Susan Davis says, "Over the long term, good habits make all the difference in your health. One of those habits should be a daily serving of Wild Blueberries."

Study Sources

1. [*Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. 2010; 58, 3996-4000](#)
2. [*Nutrition* 27 \(2011\) 338-342](#)
3. [*American Chemical Society Abstract*. August 23, 2010](#)
4. ORAC of Selected Foods, USDA-ARS, 2010

About the Wild Blueberry Association of North America (www.wildblueberries.com)

The Wild Blueberry Association of North America is a trade association of growers and processors of Wild Blueberries from Maine and Canada, dedicated to bringing the Wild Blueberry health story and unique Wild Advantages to consumers and the trade worldwide.

For news, recipes, and related health information about Wild Blueberries, visit www.wildblueberries.com, www.wildblueberryhealthblog.com and follow www.facebook.com/wildblueberries and www.twitter.com/WildBBerries4U.

###