

Chapter 8

The Impact of Wild Fruits to a Better Life Worldwide



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Abbreviations

Ca	Calcium
Cu	Copper
Fe	Iron
K	Potassium
Mg	Magnesium
Mn	Manganese
P	Phosphorus
WHO	World Health Organization
Zn	Zinc

8.1 Introduction

Plant foods especially wild edible fruits and vegetables contain plenty of health-promoting nutrients such as vitamins and minerals, and biologically active compounds that are sufficient enough to reduce the incidence of chronic diseases (Phillips et al. 2014). Based on United States Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee 2015, one of the dietary patterns recommended for reducing cardiovascular disease is the intake of meals containing less saturated trans-fats, sodium and red meat, and high vegetables and fruits (Jenkins et al. 2018; Millen et al. 2016). In rural regions, wild fruits play crucial role in preventing diseases and maintain the health of indigenous tribes (Borek 2017). Healthy diet should contain the right proportions of nutrients to lower the incidence of health disorders and mortality related to malnutrition (Bvenura and Sivakumar 2017). The regular intake of fruits, vegetables and fibre-rich food stuffs significantly lower the risk of many health ailments

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(Wilson et al. 2017). Based on recent report from World Health Organization (WHO), many people changed their lifestyle shifting to processed fatty food that is rich in energy and sugars/salts (Fernández-Ruiz et al. 2017). Allen et al. (2006) published that about 80% of people from both sexes and many developing countries utilize less than ½ kg of the daily suggested amount of fruits and vegetables (Allen et al. 2006).

Medical Scientists defined dietary fibre as indigestible oligosaccharides and polysaccharides that are found plenty in fruits and vegetables. Recent studies published that dietary fibre plays important role in maintaining health of the human body particularly gut and heart (Slavin 2013). Due to the role of dietary fibre in preventing the risk of many diseases such as colon cancer and cardiovascular diseases, Nutritionists suggest adults to have daily consumption of 25 g dietary fibers *via* the intake of whole grain meals, wild edible fruits and vegetables (Bvenura and Sivakumar 2017).

Many studies showed that oxidative stress and the imbalance between oxidants and antioxidant machinery of the body play key role in initiating many health problems such as autoimmune, neurodegenerative and heart diseases, liver cirrhosis and cancer (Kumagai et al. 2003; Mohanty and Cock 2012; Na et al. 2014). Borek, 2017 reported that vitamins E and C as natural dietary antioxidants are considered as immunity-enhancing factors in cancer therapy via relieving the side effects caused by chemotherapy and radiotherapy in some patients (Borek 2017). The longevity of Mediterranean people compared to Europeans and Americans may be referred to their high intake of dietary antioxidant-rich vegetables and fruits (Wilson et al. 2017). Dietary antioxidants from fruits and vegetables e.g. Phenolic compounds, flavonoids, anthocyanins and carotenoids have attracted the attention of many researches for their pivotal role in preventing and treating many diseases as indicated by the outcomes of their pre-clinical and clinical studies (Bvenura and Sivakumar 2017).

In this chapter, we present some of the nutritional and phytochemical profiling of selected wild fruits together with their impact on the health of human worldwide. Figure 8.1 illustrates schematic diagram for the wild fruits selected from each continent.

8.2 Wild Fruits from Africa

Rural Africans depend mainly on wild fruits as their main food source. In dry African regions where cultivation is difficult and poverty is problematic, people consider wild fruits very important for maintaining their health (Fernández-Ruiz et al. 2017). Poor nutrition is one of the biggest problems in Africa where people records the highest incidence of protein, iron, vitamin A and micronutrients deficiencies in the world manifesting many health disorders such as anemia and heart diseases (Allen et al. 2006). Recently, researchers started to focus on the nutritional and pharmacological activities of wild fruits in Africa analyzing their chemical

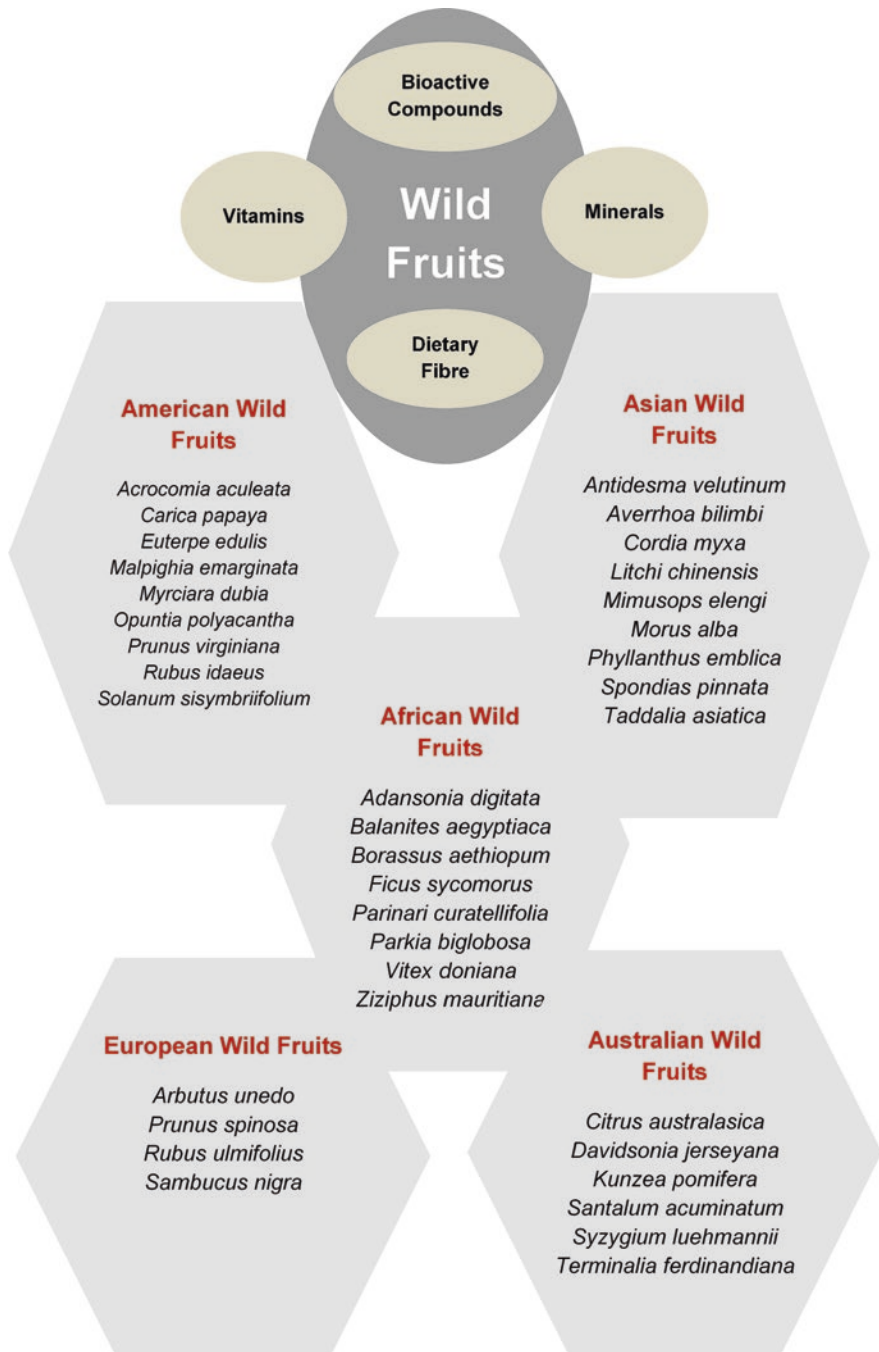


Fig. 8.1 Selected wild fruits from different continents

composition and clarifying their medicinal properties (Bvenura and Sivakumar 2017). Table 8.1 displays some important nutritional and bioactive compound constituents of commonly selected wild fruit species in Africa along with their health benefits.

8.3 Wild Fruits from America

The diversity of wild plant species is common in the American continent than other areas due to the wide climatic variation. The nutritional values and chemical composition of many wild fruit species were analyzed from American regions characterizing many biologically active compounds. Social and economic development of people allowed researchers to conduct many studies elucidating American wild fruits (Fernández-Ruiz et al. 2017). The prevalence of chronic health ailments has increased lately in many American generations due to shifting from consuming healthy traditional fruits and vegetables to fat-rich fast food (Phillips et al. 2014). In the last few years, Nutrition and Health Specialists started to encourage people to increase the consumption of wild fruits and vegetables for the efficacy of their active ingredients and high nutritive values that is enough to reduce the risk of many diseases (Schell and Gallo 2012). Table 8.2 presents the outcomes of many studies on the phytochemistry and nutrient contents of some American wild fruit species and their efficacies in alleviating the risk of many health disorders.

8.4 Wild Fruits from Asia

Asian population varies in accepting and accessing wild fruits. For example, Philippian people consider the consumption of wild fruits and vegetables as part of their daily life. In addition they harvest and process wild fruits (Chua-Barcelo 2014). Tropical Asians utilize diversity of wild fruit species for their home use and industrial production as well (Udayanga et al. 2013). Table 8.3 shows some data about the nutritional and phytochemistry of selected wild fruits from Asia continent.

8.5 Wild Fruits from Europe

European wild fruits are affected by the geography, climate and the social development of the European countries. People of Europe use many wild fruits in making desserts and jams either for selling their products or family use such as *Sambucus nigra* and *Prunus spinosa* (Łuczaj et al. 2013) while other fruits are used in making liqueurs such as *Rubus ulmifolius* (Pardo-de-Santayana et al. 2007). Table 8.4 records some wild fruit species from Europe and the benefits of their phytochemistry in health.

Table 8.1 Nutritional and bioactive contents of some selected African wild fruits, and their medicinal properties

Botanical name	Nutritional importance	Bioactive compounds	Medicinal property	Reference
<i>Adansonia digitata</i> L.	Rich in vitamin C, iron, calcium and dietary fibre	Flavonoids and polyphenols	Antioxidant antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and anti-anaemic	De Caluwé et al. (2010), Rahul et al. (2015)
<i>Balanites aegyptiaca</i> L.	Rich in vitamin C and iron	Flavonoids, saponins, glycosides and phenolics	Cardioprotective, antioxidant, anticancer, antibacterial, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective and antidiabetic	Chothani and Vaghasiya (2011)
<i>Borassus aethiopicum</i> Mart.	Rich in vitamin C	Flavonoids, saponins, glycosides and phenolics	Anti-atherogenic, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, cardioprotective and antidiabetic	Peprah et al. (2018)
<i>Ficus sycomorus</i> L.	Rich in dietary fibre	Triterpenoids, phenolic acids, flavonoids and chalcones	Antimicrobial, cardioprotective, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anticancer	Hossain (2018)
<i>Parinari curatellifolia</i> Planch. ex Benth.	Rich in dietary fibre	Polyphenols, alkaloids, flavonoids, anthraquinones and glycosides	Hypolipidemic, hepatoprotective, antiatherogenic and antioxidant	Manuwa et al. (2017)
<i>Parkia biglobosa</i> (Jacq.) R.Br. ex G.Don	Rich in vegetable protein	Polyphenols, glycosides and triterpenoids	Antibacterial, antidiabetic, anti-hypertension, anti-snake venom, antioxidant, hepatoprotective and anti-inflammatory	Gnansounou et al. (2018), Nkaforamiya et al. (2007)
<i>Vitex doniana</i> sweet	Rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre	Flavonoids, phenolic compounds and essential oils	Anti-inflammatory, antitumor, antioxidant antidiabetic, hypoglycemic, antimicrobial and antiplasmodial	Moke et al. (2018)
<i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> Lam.	Rich in vitamins, A, B and C, calcium and iron	Tannins, flavonoids and polyphenols	Hypolipidemic, antidiabetic, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and accelerate wound healing	Abubakar et al. (2018), Verma et al. (2018)

Table 8.2 Nutritional and bioactive contents of some selected American wild fruits, and their medicinal properties

Botanical name	Nutritional importance	Bioactive compounds	Medicinal property	Reference
<i>Acrocomia aculeata</i> Lodd. ex Mart.	Rich in dietary fibre	Carotenoids, tocopherols, β -carotene and phenolic compounds	Hypoglycemic, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory	Arena et al. (2018), Canavaciolo et al. (2015), Coimbra and Jorge (2011), Nunes et al. (2018)
<i>Carica papaya</i> L.	Rich in vitamins A, C, E and minerals Mg, K, Fe	Carotenoids, flavonoids, alkaloids, enzymes, and lycopene	Antioxidant, anticancer, anti-inflammatory, hypoglycemic, hypolipidemic, antifungal, antibacterial, antifertility, anti-sickling, anti-Helminthic, antihypertensive, immunomodulatory and accelerates wound healing	Shahid and Fatima (2018)
<i>Euterpe edulis</i> Mart.	Rich in fibre and vitamin C	Anthocyanins, flavonoids, polyphenols and unsaturated fatty acids	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiproliferative and hepatoprotective	Almeida Morais et al. (2014), Marques Cardoso et al. (2015)
<i>Malpighia emarginata</i> DC.	Rich in vitamin C	Flavonoids, anthocyanins, carotenoids	Antioxidant, antihyperglycemic, antihyperlipidemic, anti-photoaging, antimicrobial, antitumor, anti-inflammatory, antigenotoxic, hepatoprotective	Belwal et al. (2018)
<i>Myrciara dubia</i> (Kunth)	Rich in vitamin C	Polyphenols, pro-anthocyanins, tanins	Antioxidant, antihypertensive, anti-inflammatory, antigenotoxic and antiobesity	Anhê et al. (2019), Aride et al. (2018), dos Santos Garcia et al. (2018), Serrano et al. (2018)
<i>Opuntia polyacantha</i> Haw.	Rich in calcium	Pro-anthocyanins, carotenoids, betanins, polysaccharides	Neuroprotective, antiulcer, hypoglycemic, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective, antioxidant and immunomodulatory	Schetkin et al. (2008)
<i>Prunus virginiana</i> L.	Rich in dietary fibre and minerals, Ca, K, Mn and Zn	Anthocyanins and phenolic compounds	Antioxidant and protects against eye diseases	Aladedunye et al. (2014), Fang (2015), Grover and Samson (2014)

(continued)

Table 8.2 (continued)

Botanical name	Nutritional importance	Bioactive compounds	Medicinal property	Reference
<i>Rubus idaeus</i> L.	Rich in dietary fibre and vitamin C	Anthocyanins, phenolic, compounds	Anti-inflammatory, anti-obesity, antidiabetic and antioxidative	Noratto et al. (2017), Surya et al. (2018), Szymanowska et al. (2018), Zou et al. (2018)
<i>Solanum sisymbriifolium</i> Lam.	Rich in minerals, Ca, K, Mn and Zn	Triterpenoids, steroidal glycosides, flavonoids and alkaloids	Antitumor, antineoplastic, anticancer, antioxidant, antiviral, hypotensive and nematocidal	Fernández-Ruiz et al. (2017), Pestana et al. (2014)

Table 8.3 Nutritional and bioactive contents of some selected American wild fruits, and their medicinal properties

Botanical name	Nutritional importance	Bioactive compounds	Medicinal property	Reference
<i>Antidesma velutinum</i> L.	Rich in dietary fibre, vitamin E and minerals Ca, Mg, P	Phenolic compounds, quercetin and caffeic acid	Antioxidant and antibacterial	Fernández-Ruiz et al. (2017), D'Annibale et al. (2011), Panda et al. (2017), Shajib et al. (2013)
<i>Averrhoa bilimbi</i> L.	Rich in dietary fibre	Flavonoids, phenolic compounds, quercetin	Hypoglycemic, hypolipidemic, antidiabetic, hypotensive, antioxidant, antiulcer and anti-inflammatory	Fernández-Ruiz et al. (2017), Jagessar et al. (2018), Kurup and Mini (2017), Suluvoy et al. (2017)
<i>Cordia myxa</i> L.	Rich in minerals Mg, Cu, Fe, Zn and selenium	Phenolic compounds and flavonoids	Antipyretic, antiobesity, antioxidant and antidiabetic and antimicrobial	Nasab et al. (2017), Padhi and Singh (2017)
<i>Litchi chinensis</i> Sonn.	Rich in fibre, vitamins B, C, E, K and minerals Mg, Ca, Zn and selenium	Anthocyanins, polyphenols and carotenoids	Antiobesity, antidiabetic, antioxidant, hepatoprotective, anti-inflammatory and antitumor	Alexander-Aguilera et al. (2019), Emanuele et al. (2017), Hu et al. (2018)
<i>Mimusops elengi</i> L.	Rich in Ca	Flavonoids, phenolic compounds, alkaloids and tannins	Antimicrobial, antihelminthic, antibacterial, gastroprotective, cardioprotective, hypotensive and protects gum from bleeding	Fernández-Ruiz et al. (2017), Mathur and Vijayvergia (2017)

(continued)

Table 8.3 (continued)

Botanical name	Nutritional importance	Bioactive compounds	Medicinal property	Reference
<i>Morus alba</i> L.	Rich in minerals K, Ca, Mg, Fe Cu and selenium	Anthocyanins, polyphenols, flavonoids, alkaloids, glycoside derivatives	Anticholesterol, antidiabetic, antioxidant, antiobesity. Hypolipidemic, hepatoprotective, neuroprotective and cardioprotective	Zhang et al. (2018)
<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> L.	Rich in minerals, and vitamin C	Tannins, phenolics, flavonoids, gallic acid and emblicol	Antioxidant, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, cardioprotective, anti-Alzheimer, hypocholesterolemic, and anticancer	Gao et al. (2018), Rahmatullah et al. (2009)
<i>Spondias pinnata</i> Kurz.	Rich in vitamin E	Flavonoids, triterpenoids, phenolic compounds, syringic acid, essential amino acids and tannins	Antioxidant, antiulcer, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective, photoprotective, anti-arthritis, thrombolytic, analgesic, antipyretic, antimicrobial, antihypertensive, hypoglycemic, laxative, anti-helminthic and antipsychotic	Fernández-Ruiz et al. (2017), Sameh et al. (2018)
<i>Taddalia asiatica</i> Baill.	Rich in minerals, Fe, Cu, Mn	Essential oils, coumarins, triterpenoids, alkaloids	Antibacterial, antiviral, anti-diarrheal, anti-malarial, antidiabetic, cardioprotective, antitumor, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant	Fernández-Ruiz et al. (2017), Kariuki et al. (2013)

8.6 Wild Fruits from Australia

Indigenous Australians are depending on wild fruits as important source of their food since thousands of years ago. For example, *Kunzea pomifera* fruits were used by native Australians as a source of flour making home cakes and also for trading the surplus. Native people of Australia used to gather seasonally ripened fruits and vegetables, and eat healthy diets free from sugars and preservatives. Additionally they store those seasonal fruits for their consumption in the seasons when those fruits are not available (Clarke and Jones 2018). At the pharmacology level, researchers have raised their reports that Australian wild plants used by native people contain many medicinal compounds (Clarke 2008). Table 8.5 views some of the health-promoting ingredients of selected wild fruit species from Australia.

Table 8.4 Nutritional and bioactive contents of some selected European wild fruits, and their medicinal properties

Botanical name	Nutritional importance	Bioactive compounds	Medicinal property	Reference
<i>Arbutus unedo</i> L.	Rich in vitamin C, energy and fibre	Phenolic compounds, anthocyanins, tocopherols and carotenoids flavonoids	Neuroprotective, cardioprotective, gastroprotective, anticancer	Fonseca et al. (2015), Ruiz-Rodríguez et al. (2011)
<i>Prunus spinosa</i> L.	Rich in minerals and fibre	Flavonoids, phenolic acids and anthocyanins	Cytotoxic and apoptotic to cancer cells, antioxidant and treating gastrointestinal disorders	Meschini et al. (2017), Rop et al. (2009)
<i>Rubus ulmifolius</i> Scott.	Rich in vitamin C, iron and dietary fibre	Flavonoids, polyphenols, carotenoids and anthocyanins	Antilipidemic, antiglycemic, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial	Surya et al. (2018), de Souza et al. (2018)
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L.	Rich in calcium, iron and other minerals, and fibre	Anthocyanins, phenolic compounds, and triterpenoids	Antiproliferative, antidiabetic, and antioxidant	Divis et al. (2015), Gleńsk et al. (2017), Ho et al. (2017)

Table 8.5 Nutritional and bioactive contents of some selected American wild fruits, and their medicinal properties

Botanical name	Nutritional importance	Bioactive compounds	Medicinal property	Reference
<i>Citrus australasica</i> F.Muell.	Rich in dietary fibre, vitamin C and minerals K, Ca, Mg and Cu	Polyphenols, terpenoids, sesquiterpenes and volatile metabolites	Hypotensive, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, antioxidant, anticancer, hepatoprotective and antimicrobial	Delort et al. (2015), Donkersley et al. (2018), Mohib et al. (2018)
<i>Davidsonia jerseyana</i> F.Muell. ex F.M.Bailey	Rich in dietary fibre, minerals Ca, Zn, Cu, Fe and vitamin C	Polyphenols, pro-anthocyanins and flavonoids	Antibacterial, antiproliferative, antioxidant, anticolon cancer and antihepatocarcinoma	Sakulnarmrat et al. (2014), Sirdaarta (2016), Williams et al. (2016)
<i>Kunzea pomifera</i> F.Muell.	Rich in dietary fibre, minerals Ca, Zn, Cu, Fe and vitamin C	Triterpenoids, tannins, flavonoids, saponins, anthocyanins and phenolic compounds	Antioxidant, anticancer, antiproliferative, anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory	Sirdaarta (2016)

(continued)

Table 8.5 (continued)

Botanical name	Nutritional importance	Bioactive compounds	Medicinal property	Reference
<i>Santalum acuminatum</i> A.DC.	Rich in dietary fibre, minerals Ca, Zn, Cu, Fe and vitamin C	Chlogenic acid-rich polyphenols, phenolic compounds pro-anthocyanins and flavonoids	Cardioprotective, antiobesity, antioxidant and pancreatic lipase inhibitor	Sakulnarmrat et al. (2014)
<i>Syzygium luehmannii</i> (F.Muell.)	Rich in dietary fibre, minerals Ca, Zn, Cu, Fe and vitamin C	Phenolic compounds, flavonoids, sesquiterpenes, tannins and terpenoids	Antimicrobial, antioxidant, antibacterial, antiseptic, antiproliferative, antiobesity and anti-inflammatory	Williams et al. (2016), Murhekar et al. (2017), Wright et al. (2016)
<i>Terminalia ferdinandiana</i> Exell	Rich in dietary fibre, minerals Ca, Zn, Cu and Fe in particular, and very rich in vitamin C	Polyphenols, flavonoids, tannins, cardiac glycosides and carotenoids	Anticancer, anti-inflammatory, antiproliferative, antiobesity and antioxidant	Mohanty and Cock (2012), Sirdaarta (2016)

8.7 Conclusion

Although many wild fruits are endangered in many regions around the world due to changes in the climatic conditions, pressure from over-population and many human activities, but many wild fruits are still under regular consumption from indigenous people particularly children and pregnant women for their considerable health benefits. In addition, many wild fruits are under research to elucidate more beneficial compounds for better life worldwide through treating micro and macronutrient deficiencies and health problems such as heart, autoimmune and Alzheimer's disease. For that purpose, financial and technological facilities are required from the concerned governments and organizations to support researchers in elucidating more bioactive compounds from wild fruits for better and healthy life.

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