



Press Release

'Superherbs' bring straight from nature what additives promise

Tea extracts and plant extracts: functionality the natural way

May 2010. For many people, it is the first thing they do each morning: put some tealeaves in a pot and brew it up with some hot water. With the healthy substances and active components they contain, natural extracts of certain established and proven herbs and plants also provide the food industry with valuable ingredients for beverages, delivering straight from nature the same benefits that products with added ingredients promise. Tea and herb extracts offer functionality in a completely natural way. Product concepts containing natural herbal extracts are thus right in line with the current consumer trend for purity, authenticity and simplicity – especially when it comes to food.

Health and wellness are megatrends. The desire for fitness and well-being profoundly influences the way many people choose to structure their lives. Leisure activities, body care and especially eating habits are organised around being fit and healthy. Over the years, the food industry has launched countless products that have focused very specifically on providing additional health benefits and that have been supplemented with a wide range of additives intended solely to fit with the consumer trend for 'added value'. The result: the consumer was in danger of losing sight, in the jungle of super-extras, of what was actually good for him and his body. It was time to take a step back. Consumers want to understand the product concepts they are offered, and in accordance with the slogan 'back to the roots', they look for simplicity and naturalness.

The positive effects of tea, herbs and spices on the human organism have been known and prized for thousands of years. Used correctly, many herbs have a calming effect, while others strengthen the immune system or stimulate various functions. A 'nice cup of tea' is synonymous with a brief pause in the daily routine, an interlude of peace and calm, that is celebrated with a little ritual. Teas, herbs and spices represent naturalness, and are popular for the vast array of flavours in which they can be obtained. The range goes all the way from A for aniseed to Z for lemongrass and includes flowery, refreshing, spicy and herbal notes.

Herbal extracts for natural additional benefits

“In the beverage industry, high-quality, concentrated extracts of herbs and teas are ideal for developing innovative drinks that have natural additional benefits. Health-conscious consumers understand and appreciate product concepts that contain herbal extracts, and they can relate to them. This means natural extracts are perfect for incorporating into interesting new beverage formulations, and they offer a vast array of combination possibilities”, says Martin P. Leuzinger, Head of Global Market Segment Management at packaging manufacturer SIG Combibloc. Initially, in the beverage industry it was mainly products based on water that were enhanced with extracts of teas and various herbs. Well-known examples are the Austrian herbal lemonade 'Almdudler' and Lipton ice tea, which has been selling as an instant tea since the 1940s and as a ready-to-drink beverage since the 1970s. But current product concepts, ranging from near-water drinks, milk and yoghurt drinks, carbonated and non-carbonated soft drinks to combinations with juices, show that tea and herbal extracts can be added to any type of beverage.

Concentrated potency

Herbal extracts are not to be compared with artificial flavourings. There are a number of methods for obtaining concentrated extracts from herbs and teas, all of which are based on the use of natural raw materials. First, the plant parts are cleaned and crushed and usually mixed with purified water in extraction tanks, to remove the colourants and flavour substances. In some cases, heat is applied to assist in this process. In essence, this is the same as the classic tea-brewing technique.

Using special presses, filter equipment or centrifuges, the natural extracts are separated out and pasteurised or dried as required. The final product is natural ingredients with a vast array of possible applications, that have one thing in common: a natural source.

Martin P. Leuzinger: “As has been shown, concentrated herbal extracts contain all the beneficial active substances of the original plants and can be incorporated into drinks without difficulty. When this is done, the costs remain stable for the manufacturer, or can even be reduced: comparatively small doses of concentrated, natural extracts are required to generate healthy additional benefits for products that can be placed squarely in the premium segment”.

Example: 'SUPERHERBS' from Plantextrakt

Plantextrakt, part of the Martin Bauer Group, has developed the product concept SUPERHERBS. The concept is based on the properties of herbal extracts. The Martin Bauer Group premiered the

SUPERHERBS concept in November 2009 at the Food ingredients Europe (FiE) exhibition, and in May 2010 the company also presented its new product idea at Vitafoods in Geneva. For the launch of a milk drink containing extracts of black tea and ginger with natural coconut flavour, and a yoghurt drink with hibiscus, pomegranate and grape seed extracts, the company has opted for the carton pack combifit*Small* from SIG Combibloc, fitted with the screw cap combiSmart.

That the Martin Bauer Group has struck a chord with modern consumers with the SUPERHERBS product concept is shown by data from renowned market research company Mintel GNPD. According to these data, in the past five years alone, more than 1,000 new alcohol-free drinks containing herbs have been launched.

Herbal extracts are in demand due to, among other features, their antioxidant properties. The SUPERHERBS yoghurt drink containing hibiscus, pomegranate and grape seed extracts, for instance, has almost ten times the antioxidant potential of a conventional orange juice. In addition, two scientific studies have enabled the Martin Bauer Group to verify the positive effects of selected herbal extracts on skin health. "Our SUPERHERBS concept ticks all the right boxes by providing amazing taste experiences, together with valuable functional additional benefits that have been scientifically proven", says Oliver Hehn, Marketing Manager at Plantextrakt. Plantextrakt is a leading producer of tea extracts, herbal extracts, natural tea flavours and decaffeinated teas for the food industry.

Captions:

Photo – Extracts:

Tea and herb extracts offer functionality in a completely natural way. Product concepts containing natural herbal extracts are thus right in line with the current consumer trend for purity, authenticity and simplicity – especially when it comes to food.

Photo: SIG Combibloc

Photo – Superherbs:

Plantextrakt, an extract supplier belonging to the Martin Bauer Group, offers its 'SUPERHERBS' product concept in combifit*Small*, a carton pack from SIG Combibloc. Products such as a milk drink containing extracts of black tea and ginger with natural coconut flavour and a yoghurt drink with hibiscus, pomegranate and grape seed extracts, have been developed.

Photo: SIG Combibloc

Photo – Actilife Beauty:

Under the brand "Actilife", Swiss company Bischofszell Food Ltd has launched a beauty drink made from orange- and cranberry juice enriched with rose pedal extracts which supports a beautiful skin and enhances cell regeneration.

Photo: SIG Combibloc

SIG Combibloc is one of the world's leading system suppliers of carton packaging and filling machines for beverages and food. In 2009 the company achieved a turnover of 1,260 million Euro with around 4,250 employees in 40 countries. SIG Combibloc is part of the New Zealand based Rank Group.

Your contact:

Heike Thevis – Press Officer

SIG Combibloc GmbH

Rurstraße 58, D-52441 Linnich, Germany

Tel.: +49 2462 79 2608

Fax: +49 2462 79 17 2608

E-Mail: heike.thevis@sig.biz