

NUTRITION NEWS & NOTES

Ancient “Superfood” Promotes Healthy Endurance

(NAPSA)—A growing number of people are finding that an ancient “superfood” has a prominent place in a modern, healthful dietary regimen.

The chia plant has a rich history of use in ancient cultures. In pre-Columbian civilizations, such as that of the Aztecs, chia seeds were used as a high-energy food and were a staple of the daily diet. Some ancient civilizations used chia for the preparation of medicines, nutritional blends, even paints.

The ancient Mayan civilization also relied heavily on chia for its dietary needs. In fact, modern Mexico’s state Chiapas derives its name from the Nahuatl word “chiapan,” which means “chia river,” an indicator of the plant’s prominence in ancient cultures. Historical records also indicate that the Indians of the southwest United States also ate chia to boost endurance for running and other extended physical activities.

When the Spanish came to the Americas in the 16th century, they abolished the use of certain native crops such as chia because of their association with religion. And for nearly 400 years, chia was grown only in small quantities in isolated areas of Mexico and Central America.

Then, in 1991, a program called the Northwestern Argentina Regional Project was established by farmers and various public agencies in Argentina, Bolivia and the United States to study and produce alternative crops such as chia. Researchers recommended its production in order to improve both the economic prospects for South Ameri-



An ancient plant, rediscovered in recent years, can make foods more nutritious.

can farmers and the nutrition of Western diets. And today, chia is considered an excellent source of protein, calcium, fiber, vitamins and minerals. In addition, chia oil is one of the richest sources of omega-3 fatty acids.

Functional Product Trading S.A., the world’s largest chia producer, invested more than 10 years in seed selection and research to develop Benexia Chia Seed. Benexia is a gluten-free whole grain, organically grown and naturally harvested. It can be eaten right from the plant, mixed with food, drink or ground into flour for baking. And adding the chia to food can give it an excellent nutritional profile—without compromising taste.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.renewlife.com/products/Ultimate-CHIA.aspx.