Maca Root / Herb and its Benefits

Maca is a South American cruciferous vegetable that has the distinction of being the plant that can grow in the highest elevation in the world, more than 15,000 feet above sea level in the Andes Mountains. Maca is a remarkable plant due to its ability to thrive at this altitude, which is nearly a mile higher than non-pressurized airplanes are allowed to fly!

Natives in Peru have used maca, also known as Peruvian ginseng, for thousands of years both as food and for medicinal purposes. As a nutritional supplement, maca is most widely used as a sexual stimulant and for energy and endurance.

Scientific research on mice noted that male mice triple the frequency of sexual activity when fed high doses of maca. A study conducted with humans in Peru confirmed what the mouse study suggested.

In a double blind, placebo-controlled study, men between the ages of 21 and 56 were given 3 g of maca or placebo for a period of 12 weeks. The men who took maca reported increased sexual desire after about 8 weeks of treatment, even though the supplements did not appear to affect levels of testosterone in the men's blood.

Documentation from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries suggest that Incas warriors used maca to increase vitality and strength.

When the Spaniards came to Peru, they found maca to be one of the most consumed and marketed products in region, and they soon began using it to make their own horses more fertile. According to farmers in the Andes today, maca is so potent that it leaves the soil in which it is planted sterile.

Consistent with Andean tradition, maca continues to be used for a variety of purposes. In addition to using it as an energy booster, it is said to be effective in correcting irregular menstruation, easing menopausal symptoms and fighting insomnia. It is sometimes used to treat malnutrition and by people who are recovering from illness as well.

Maca is also said to be a fertility aid and an aphrodisiac. In addition, it has properties that may make it effective in treating arthritis and respiratory problems due to what shamans and herbalist consider its "hot" qualities.

Maca is rich in nutrients and phytochemicals, including alkaloids, phenols, flavonoids, tannins, glycosides, saponins, and amino acids. As an herbal supplements, the root of maca is used in dried or powdered form and in capsules and tablets. Since maca is a food, it can be consumed in relatively high doses. Dried or powdered maca can be used in drinks or sprinkled on food, and it is available in capsules and tablets as well.

Three or more grams of maca root per day is usually recommended. Though it may take a while for results to be noticed, some people report feeling the effects of maca within hours. It is said to have no side effects, drug interactions or contraindications.

Maca is readily available online. Our recommended online retailer, BodyBuilding.com, has several offerings—both in powder format and capsules!

We highly recommend the Xtend-Life brand of vitamins. A New Zealand based-company with a passion for developing excellent products and backing them up with stellar customer service, we highly recommend you visit their web site and investigate their offerings.

Visit the Xtend-Life web site! (Link will open in a new window... you will not lose your place here!)

Have you been the victim of a product that makes exaggerated claims? Launch a complaint!

US visitors should submit a complaint to the US Federal Trade Commission!

Canadians, submit a complaint at the Canadian Competition Bureau!

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