



What's in Your Cup of Tea? Antioxidants!

by Patricia Caraway

Second only to pure water, tea is the most often consumed beverage in the world and has been a part of world history, culture and South Carolina tradition. Consuming tea is a naturally important consideration in our diet and health. The most important health factor regarding tea is the powerful antioxidants it contains. Tea is ranked as high as or higher than many fruits and vegetables in the ORAC score, a scientific means of measuring the antioxidant potential of plant-based foods.

When we use oxygen, our bodies produce free radicals as a by-product, which cause damage to cells and accelerate aging. Antioxidants neutralize free radicals preventing them from causing damage. Oxidative damage is a contributing factor to age-associated diseases such as heart disease, cancer and macular degeneration. Antioxidants also have been shown to fight viruses. Epigallocatechin gallate, one of the antioxidants found in green tea, is said to be one hundred times more effective than vitamin C and 25 times more effective than vitamin E at protecting cells from damage.

Black, green, white and oolong teas are made from the leaves of an evergreen known as *Camellia sinensis*. The least processed of the teas are white and unfermented green varieties, which retain higher antioxidant values. The more the leaves are processed, the darker they will turn, and, although the antioxidant value is lower, all teas still do have them.

The most natural way to receive health benefits from tea is to drink a brew made from quality tea leaves, ideally certified organic. Socially conscious tea drinkers should also consider choosing Fair Trade tea. Besides the soothing aroma and taste and time-honored meditative ritual of making tea, drinking it offers amazing benefits. Sit back and enjoy a great cup and remember how good it is for you.

For more information about gourmet certified organic teas, call Harvest Moon Soapworks at the Pee Dee Farmers' Market in Florence, (843) 661-1008, or visit HMSoapworks.com. Harvest Moon carries handcrafted soaps, gifts and fine herbal organic and Free Trade teas. See ad page 41.

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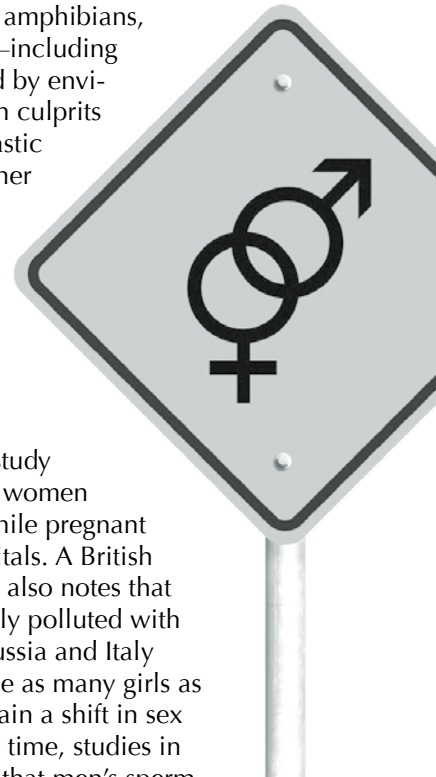
Gender Bender

Pollutants Cause Global Feminization

A report based on 250 scientific studies around the world has concluded that male fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals—including humans—are being feminized by environmental pollution. Common culprits include phthalates used in plastic food wraps, cosmetics and other products; flame retardants; and many pesticides. The new report was released by CHEMTrust, a British organization that advocates for protection of humans and wildlife from harmful chemicals.

The report follows a US study that shows baby boys born to women exposed to such chemicals while pregnant have smaller penises and genitals. A British newspaper, *The Independent*, also notes that women in communities heavily polluted with such chemicals in Canada, Russia and Italy have been giving birth to twice as many girls as boys, perhaps helping to explain a shift in sex ratios worldwide. At the same time, studies in more than 20 countries show that men's sperm counts have dropped from 150 million per milliliter of sperm fluid to 60 million over the past 50 years.

Source: DrWeil.com.



Earth Grants

2009 Opportunities for Innovative Leaders

Each year, 40 new promising and proven leaders selected by TogetherGreen from among scores of outstanding applicants, receive professional development opportunities, a \$10,000 grant to help support an innovative conservation action project, and introduction to an international network of committed leaders. Results of these role model programs show up as significant gains in habitat, water and energy conservation, and environmental education.

In 2008, TogetherGreen awarded \$1.4 million in funding to new and existing collaborative projects, ranging from restoration of wetlands, grasslands and global bird habitats to engaging children with nature and encouraging the next generation of conservation professionals. The 2009-2010 Fellows program runs 18 months. Participants attend a five-day Leadership Institute this summer and a three-day retreat next summer.

Applications are due April 15, 2009; selections are announced in July. For details, visit TogetherGreen.org.