



## *Best of the Berry Doctor 2008*

It's October 2008, 2 years of weekly essays concluded.  
Time to review what readers liked best about the  
past year's reports.

Measured by a webpage visit counter, we'll present  
again the top 3 articles of 2008!

### *Number 2*

## *How Do I Find Superfruits at My Grocery Store?*

### *Part 3. Significant Scientific Agreement and Health Claims*



[follow the [Wikipedia](#) links]

## *While visiting the grocery store or shopping online, let's **keep 5 things in mind***

1. **choose whole foods if possible**  
(processed foods and juices diminish nutrient contents)
2. **buy using color as a guide**  
(richer colors = richer nutrient and **phytochemical** content)
3. superfruits have richer contents of **dietary (especially prebiotic) fiber** and vitamin C (buy **foods with edible skins and seeds, and chew them!** -- like berries)
4. buy fruits with good research foundation (consult authoritative sources; check out the current list of established and emerging superfruits by **searching the background for each on Wikipedia**)
5. make sure the fruits you choose are fresh, dried, frozen or canned (see the list at the bottom of this article, above the mango picture) and **have appealing taste** to assure continuing use by your family members -- *we're trying to build long-term habits.*

*This is not a one-time experiment!*

## *Synopsis* of what you'll find in this essay

- **summary from Part 1** about what a superfruit is
- 4 key nutrients/phytochemicals contained in superfruits -- combined high levels of dietary (prebiotic) fiber, vitamin C, carotenoids, phenolics
- **from Part 2, disease targets** possibly affected by these nutrients, with links to medical research abstracts
- what is significant scientific agreement?
- link to the FDA website displaying **health claims for fruits and vegetables**

Superfruit is simply a marketing term used by any manufacturer wishing to give its product advertising glow. You won't find this word in any scientific report.

If used under "best possible scientific" definition, it would mean a given fruit has:

1. extraordinary nutrient richness and diverse range of nutrients
2. high content of antioxidant **phytochemicals** (mostly pigments, so the fruit has rich color)
3. sufficient medical research evidence pointing toward eventual proof of human health benefits
4. performance in the market showing that consumer interest is high
5. appealing taste, fragrance and appearance ... or consumers will not be repeat buyers.

\*\* **Children's preferences** are important market indicators because there is **evidence for increasing favor by children toward fruits for snacks**, [click!](#)

These definitions, however, do not help a typical shopper while choosing products in the grocery store.



**Spoon yourself some color!**

Let color be your guide for putting superfruits into your diet.  
The more color, the better the possible benefit.

### *What medical research backs up use of superfruits as healthy for my family?*

You won't find the word superfruit in medical literature or in doctor's office literature.

It's a new marketing term started around 2005 and used often in the manufacturing industry for **functional foods and nutraceuticals** where marketers are trying to create an edge for selling their products.

Read the [Wikipedia article on superfruits](#), *click!*

## ***Part 3***

# The Path to Health Claims

If fruits really are "super", shouldn't they be farthest along in the rigorous process that ends with a claim important to human health?

Scientists would want it this way, knowing that years of research and discovery have defined a fruit well enough to qualify it for **clinical trials** which, upon conclusive results, would demonstrate a fruit (or a fruit component) effective against a specific disease -- earning it **health claim status** by the **FDA**.

That whole process is called *significant scientific agreement* (SSA) which convinces regulatory authorities of confirmation among scientists about health effects of taking a food, supplement or drug.

If you're really into understanding this process, click the [link for an extensive FDA document on SSA](#).

Where do superfruits stand in gathering SSA on the path to health claims?

Have a look at this table, a subjective summary.

## Progress of superfruits toward SSA and health claims

(numbers are ranks from 0 for no progress to 5 for near health claim approval)

Fruit	Basic research status*	Clinical trial status*	Total current SSA*	Projected year of health claim approval
Açaí	1	0	1	> 2018
Blueberry	3	2	3	2014
Cranberry	4	4	4	2013
Red Grape	4	3	4	2012
Goji (wolfberry)	2	0	1	> 2018
Mango	3	0	2	> 2018
Papaya	3	0	2	> 2018
Pomegranate	2	3	3	2013
Seaberry	2	0	1	> 2018

\* subjective ranks, 0 = low, 4-5 = high

Summarizing in simple words

- blueberry, cranberry, red grape and pomegranate have sufficient SSA and current clinical trial activity to estimate that each will earn a health claim within the next 6 years

- all the rest need 10+ years of more research to gain significant scientific agreement before reaching health claim evaluation

Meanwhile, there are hints from granted **FDA health claims** of what nutrients are needed.

Such as these two familiar statements (bold italics) appearing on product labels and health advisories

- Health claims: fruits, vegetables, and grain products that contain fiber, particularly soluble fiber, and risk of coronary heart disease. Diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol and rich in fruits, vegetables, and grain products that contain some types of dietary fiber, particularly soluble fiber, *may reduce the risk of heart disease, a disease associated with many factors.*
- Health claims: fruits and vegetables and cancer. Low fat diets rich in fruits and vegetables (foods that are low in fat and may contain dietary fiber, Vitamin A, or Vitamin C) *may reduce the risk of some types of cancer, a disease associated with many factors.* Broccoli is high in vitamin A and C, and it is a good source of dietary fiber.

### *What plants have nutrient criteria to qualify as superfruits?*

Not many.

Here's a partial list based on available nutrient and phytochemical analyses with sufficient amounts of published research.

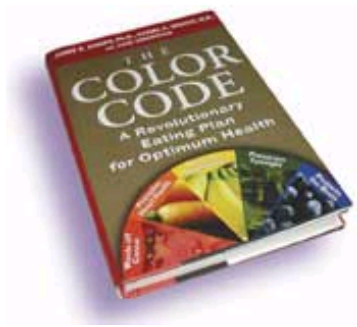
[follow the [Wikipedia](#) links]

- mango
- kiwifruit
- red guava (rare in most grocery stores)
- papaya
- seaberry (not found in grocery stores)
- wolfberry (goji) (rare in most grocery stores -- dried whole fruit preferred)
- red raspberries
- blackberries
- strawberries
- red or black grapes
- cranberries
- blueberries
- pomegranate
- blackcurrants



Mango (*Mangifera indica* L.).  
A great package of superfruit nutrients.

Practice the **Color Code** in how you shop and prepare snacks and meals!



One author, Dr. Jim Joseph, is a **USDA** scientist.  
Click the image to launch Amazon.com where inexpensive copies are available

Here's a list of color-rich fruits and vegetables for getting "superfruit nutrients" into your diet!

Remember -- plant foods don't have to be only fresh to obtain significant nutrient content: dried, frozen and canned products are fine!

**Red:** strawberries, red raspberries, goji berries, tomatoes, red bell peppers

**Orange-yellow:** mangoes, oranges, sweet potatoes, squash, pumpkin

**Blue-Purple:** blueberries, Concord or black grapes, black plums and prunes, blackberries, purple cabbage

**Green (white):** grapes, kiwifruit, spinach, broccoli

From the above list, you not only get color,  
you get **prebiotic fiber!**

\* See the [Wikipedia article on superfruits](#), *click!*

\* [Superfruits take center stage in the functional foods industry](#)

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