

Moringa Oleifera - Miracle Tree

Written by Deborah Birge, Fort Bend County Master Gardener

If you've cruised the tea or supplement aisle lately, you've seen very expensive Moringa tea and powders. Moringa Oleifera is also known as miracle tree, tree of life, drumstick tree, horseradish tree, and ben oil tree or benzolive tree.

A quick internet search tells us Moringa is an important food source in some parts of the world. Because it can be grown cheaply and easily, and the leaves retain lots of vitamins and minerals when dried, moringa is used in India and Africa in feeding programs to fight malnutrition. The immature green pods (drumsticks) are prepared similarly to green beans, while the seeds are removed from more mature pods and cooked like peas or roasted like nuts. The leaves are cooked and used like spinach, and they are also dried and powdered for use as a condiment. The seed cake remaining after oil extraction is used as a fertilizer and also to purify well water and to remove salt from seawater.¹



Photo by J.M.Garg

But will they thrive in Fort Bend County? Yes, yes, they will. Moringa Oleifera trees are native to Africa and Asia so they are drought-resistant, have exceptionally deep roots and can grow in sandy to clay soils, meaning they thrive in even the harshest conditions. We've had abundant rain this year but my tree grew from 6 inches to 12 feet in just 6 months with absolutely no care or concern from me. The leaves are tasty as are the flowers. No seed pods this year but I'm hoping for some next year. Moringa trees are perennial and grow back reliably after a freeze.

But what about those nutritional claims? Lab results for Moringa oleifera leaf extract per 100 g (3.5 oz) show the following values:

Carbohydrates	9.1 g
Dietary fiber	2.1 g
Fat	1.7 g
Protein	8.1 g

More nutritional information can be found at <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/nutritional-values-of-moringa-oleifera-total-protein-amino-acid-vitamins-minerals-carbohydrates-total-fat-and-crude-fiber-under-th-1948-5948-1000396-101110.html>

This is an interesting tree to grow and can be worked into your diet by adding it to salads, stir-fries, sautéing the tips, adding to soups, smoothies or teas.

See you at the Fruit Tree Sale, February 9, 2019.

External Sources:

[1 https://www.heirloomgardener.com/plant-profiles/moringa-oleifera-zmaz15wzsbak](https://www.heirloomgardener.com/plant-profiles/moringa-oleifera-zmaz15wzsbak)

<https://www.webmd.com/vitamins/ai/ingredientmono-1242/moringa>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moringa_oleifera

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2213453016300362>