

Vaccinium macrocarpon

Vaccinium macrocarpon, commonly known as Cranberry, is a low-growing evergreen shrub native to North America. Its berries have been traditionally used for centuries as food and in herbal wellness practices, particularly for urinary tract support and antioxidant benefits. Today, cranberry products are widely consumed worldwide in juices, supplements, and functional foods.

Key facts

- **Scientific name:** *Vaccinium macrocarpon*
- **Common names:** Cranberry
- **Family:** Ericaceae
- **Active compounds:** Proanthocyanidins, flavonoids, vitamin C
- **Typical forms:** Juices, capsules, extracts, dried berries

Botanical characteristics

Vaccinium macrocarpon is a trailing evergreen shrub that grows in acidic bog environments. It produces small pink flowers and bright red berries that are harvested for culinary and medicinal applications.

Traditional and modern uses

Traditionally, cranberries have been used as a nutritional food source and for urinary wellness support. In modern herbal medicine and nutrition, cranberry products are commonly promoted for urinary tract health, antioxidant support, and general wellness.

Mechanism and research

Research suggests that cranberry proanthocyanidins may reduce bacterial adhesion to urinary tract tissues, particularly involving certain strains of *Escherichia coli*. Clinical studies have explored cranberry products for urinary tract wellness and antioxidant effects, although findings remain variable.

Safety and regulation

Cranberry products are generally considered safe when consumed in moderate amounts. Excessive intake may contribute to gastrointestinal discomfort in some individuals. People taking anticoagulant medications such as warfarin should consult healthcare professionals before regular use.

Culinary and supplement context

Cranberries are widely used in juices, sauces, dried fruit products, supplements, and functional beverages. Their tart flavor and association with urinary wellness continue to support strong global popularity.