

Tale from the Garden

BEETROOT has a hard time. It's not everybody's go-to vegetable! But the humble beet has some amazing properties and may just change your life!



Two hearts beet as one ...

Beetroot was written about as early as 5,000 years ago and Hippocrates known as the 'father of medicine' wrote that the beetroot was perfect for cleansing the blood and promoting a longer, healthier life. Indeed, 2,000 years ago the Romans also consumed beetroot for stamina and used the leaves for healing wounds. The Roman's also considered the beetroot to be an aphrodisiac.

The ancient Greeks claimed that the Goddess of Love Aphrodite devoured beetroot and the natural nutrients attributed to her famous beauty. Aphrodite was exquisitely beautiful. She was sensual, snuggle-some and could melt hearts with the flick of a holy eyelid. And to what did she attribute her romantic powers? It wasn't lipstick, perfume or a little black dress. It was beetroot. She couldn't get enough of the stuff! In fact, beetroot has a legendary connection to affairs of the heart. With Aphrodite as patron and unofficial Beet Goddess, the word spread that beetroots could enhance beauty and provide aphrodisiac properties. The Oracle at Delphi claimed that beetroots are worth their weight in silver, second only to horseradish in mystic potency. And the Oracle certainly knew a thing or two. The belief persists to this day that if a man and a woman eat from the same beetroot, they will fall in love! These beliefs may simply be from association with Aphrodite, but there could be a better theory. The beetroot is roughly the same colour and shape as the organ of love, the heart. And that raises the humble beet from a boring vegetable to a Symbol.

So when women of the early Celt cultures used powdered beetroot as rouge and lipstick, they weren't just making themselves red in the face. They were taking on the romantic aura of the hearty beet. Beetroots were even featured on early Valentine cards with puns a-plenty! Victorian ladies used beetroot juice as lip colouring, blusher and as hair dye, which may be where they discovered it might fight dandruff. If you boil beetroot in water and then massage the water into your scalp each night, it works as an effective cure for dandruff. This may be because your head turns pink so no one notices the dandruff!

Beetroot appears in several Talmud ceremonies to ward off disease and obtain God's favour. The Talmud is the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law (halakha) and Jewish theology. Until the advent of modernity, in nearly all Jewish communities, the Talmud was the centre-piece of Jewish cultural life and was foundational to "all Jewish thought and aspirations", serving also as "the guide for the daily life" of Jews. The Hebrew word for beetroot appears to resemble the word for 'banish'. It's probable that the blood-red colour also has some health/military significance. If you have healthy beet-powered blood, you'll quickly dispatch your enemies. Particularly if their unrighteous blood is turnip-coloured!

Beetroots were also used in some cultures to colour hard-boiled eggs, making them bright red. These were eaten as symbols of the Sun God to give prosperity, health and other benefits.

Finally, check out KVASIR, the Norse God of Inspiration. There's a strong beetroot connection here as Kvas, the staple health drink of the Slav and Nordic peoples, is made from fermented beet juice and comes straight out of the mythology.

Beetroot (*Beta vulgaris*) is a root vegetable also known as red beet, table beet, garden beet, or just beet. A favourite in 1970s British salads (cooked and pickled in vinegar), beetroot is a root vegetable with dark purple skin and pink/purple flesh. In fact, there are numerous types of beetroot, many of which are distinguished by their colour - yellow, white, pink, or dark purple. It has also enjoyed something of a deserved comeback in recent years – its

earthy, rich, sweet flavour and vibrant colour lends itself to a variety of both sweet and savoury dishes. It's now used in many cuisines around the world. Beetroot is a close relative of spinach and chard, and has good nutritional content – it's also reckoned to be a good detoxifier. Beets are packed with essential vitamins, minerals and plant compounds, some of which have medicinal properties. What's more, they are delicious and easy to add to your diet.

Love it or hate it, beetroot has a lot going for it. This sweet, ruby red root veg packs a powerful nutritional punch. It has a delicious and distinctive depth of flavour. Beetroot is super versatile too, freshly roasted it is rich and nutty; buy it ready cooked and it's a sweet topping or a health giving smoothie ingredient; try it dipped in sweet chilli from the chiller and you'll get through a punnet in no time!

Did you know that eating 200g of cooked beetroot provides the same health benefits as drinking 500ml of juice? So whether you are 'juicer' or a 'snacker' you can easily get your 5-a-day with beetroot!

Hearts that 'beet' as one - I was once heard a story about a test that was being done with hearts, human hearts. Doctors and scientists were testing hearts outside the body. They held two beating hearts side by side and listened to their unique beats. Each heart had a different beat, a different rhythm. When they allowed the two hearts to touch, after a few seconds their beats became the same – they were in unison, the same exact heartbeat. Two hearts beating as one!

Can you hear the Lord saying – 'this is what happens when the heart of one of My people touch My heart, the beat becomes the same, it becomes ONE heartbeat'

How often have you prayed for God to show us ways that we can touch His heart? Do you want your heart to beat as one with His? Do you want to be one with Him, in complete unison with the heart of God?

Proverbs 23:26 says; "give me your heart and let your eyes observe my ways."

How do our hearts touch to bring forth this unity of rhythm? There are many ways to touch the heart of God.

First, worship touches the heart of God. Many times in worship we can feel so close to God that it seems as if we are in Him and He is in us – we are beating as one. When we worship God, He draws near...the more we worship, the closer He draws, until we are literally one. Psalms 95:6 says; 'Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!' and Psalms 99:5 declares; 'Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he!' Worship should be part of our daily lives in Christ.

Another way of touching the heart of God is by loving His people, His creation. The Bible says whatever we do to the least of these, we do to God. When we show love to someone else we are literally showing love to God, that's what His word says. In Matthew 25:40, we see Jesus says; 'The King will answer and say to them, 'I assure you and most solemnly say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it for Me.' God is love and we should be walking love vessels. Love covers, love heals, love restores – we serve a loving God, He gave us unconditional love, we received it freely, we should also give it freely. When we give, especially when it is a challenge to us, then it touches the heart of God.

Finally, I believe that trusting God, when it looks like we have absolutely no reason to trust, touches His heart. When He knows we are hurting and afraid yet we continue to declare what His word says right in the midst of it, I know that touches His heart.

In Habakkuk 3 we read; 'Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.' To me, this describes a heart totally his – a heart that no matter what it sees or feels, it continues to trust in God.

We must CHOOSE to continue to touch the heart of God even and especially when it appears things aren't going our way – it is a choice, our choice. And we must always remember that our choices produce...either life or death...all choices produce something. Choose wisely.