




Cactus Pear Fruit and Cladodes

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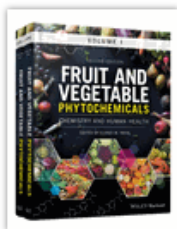
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Abstract

This chapter aims to cover the potential phytochemical, medicinal, and industrial applications of the cactus fruit and cladodes and their by-products. An important component of cactus fruit and other products is pigments, which bestow a particular attractiveness on fruit and products, among other functions. The health-promoting properties of cactus fruit and other parts have been the object of great interest, with special attention to antioxidant phytochemicals. The nutritional and health benefits are associated with the antioxidant properties of compounds such as phenolics, ascorbic acid, and pigments. Mucilage, seed oil, and dietary fiber are the main healthy compounds extracted from different by-products of cactus pear processing. In the Mexican market there are several products from cladodes, such as capsules, pills, and powders to prepare beverages, 'tortillas' enriched with cladodes powder, and other products that are usually consumed as food supplements to prevent several diseases.



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