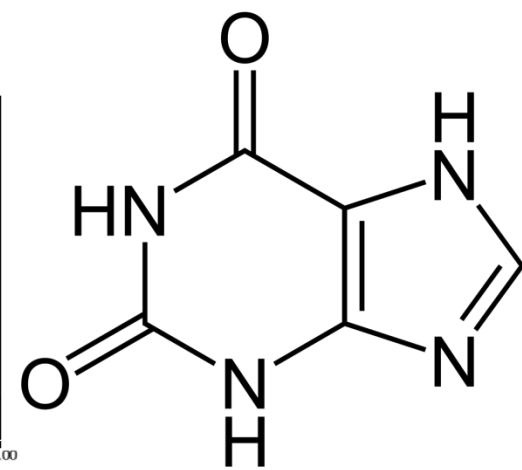
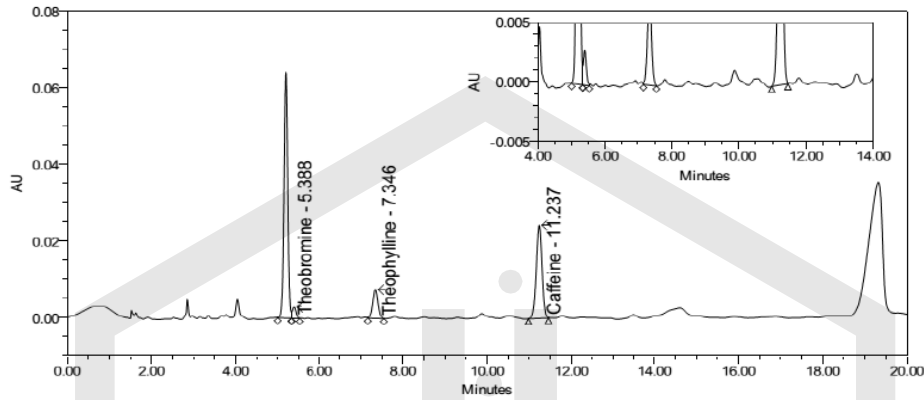


Plant of the Month

By Jonathan Crellin, Alkemist Labs



Chemistry

The main components in yerba mate (in decreasing order) are caffeine, theobromine, and theophylline. It also contains 24 vitamins and minerals, 15 amino acids, abundant antioxidants, and polyphenols.

Yerba Mate

Ilex paraguariensis



Sales

Manufacturing: Not in top 40
Consumer: Not in top 20



Botany/Preparation

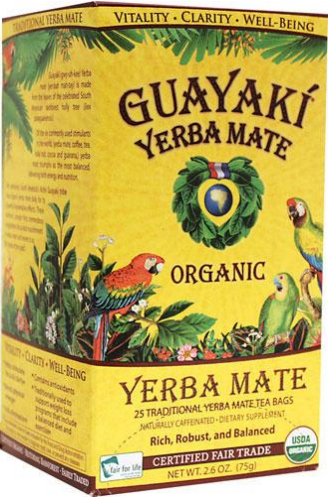
Yerba mate is a small tree native to the subtropical Atlantic forests of Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Brazil. The tree needs about 25 years to develop completely, reaching a height of up to 15 meters. An infusion called mate is brewed in hot water using the dried leaves and stems of the tree. It is traditionally made inside of a hollowed out gourd and drank through a metal straw.

Pharmacology

The caffeine, theobromine, and theophylline found in yerba mate are common stimulants also found in tea, coffee, and chocolate. The caffeine content varies between that of green tea and coffee. Also its low tannin and acid content mean it is less likely be bitter and cause stomach acid and jitters. The plant is said to have the "strength of coffee, the health benefits of tea, and the euphoria of chocolate" all in one beverage.

History/Traditional Use

Yerba mate was discovered centuries ago in South America. It was consumed to enhance health, vitality, and longevity. Since then it has been used as a base for herbal medicines. It is consumed by millions of South Americans as a healthful alternative to coffee, and deemed "The Drink of the Gods" by many indigenous groups.



References

1. <https://phytochem.nal.usda.gov/phytochem/search/list>
2. <http://guayaki.com/mate/130/Yerba-Mate.html>