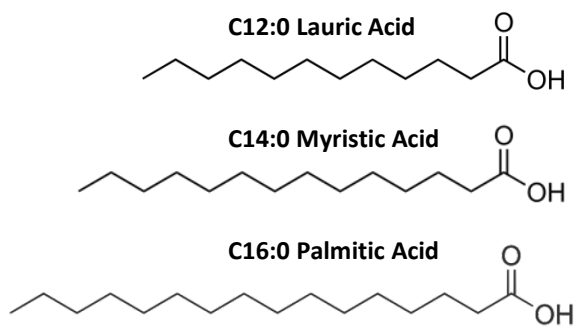
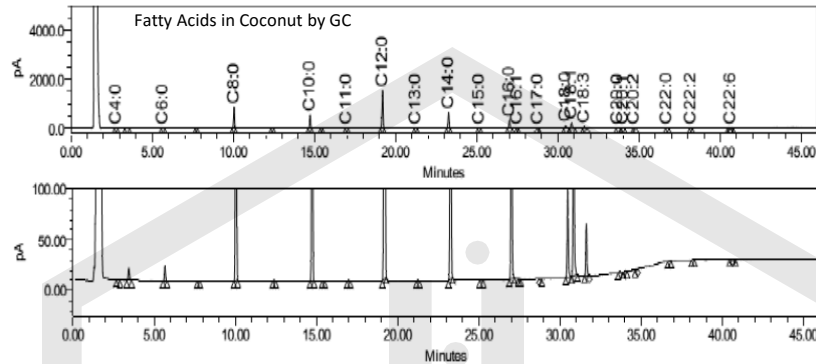




Plant of the Month
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 \\NAS\Station 15\Plant of the Month\



Chemistry

The milk and oil in coconut are high in medium-chain triglyceride (MCT) content. These are composed of different fatty acids ranging in carbon chains of 6 to 12. The most prominent fatty acids in coconut are C12:0, C14:0, and C16:0. C12:0, also known as lauric acid, accounts for almost 50% of the fatty acid content.

History/Traditional Use

The origin of *Cocos nucifera* is still disputed. A common theory is that it originated in the Indian-Indonesia region and was distributed around the world by floating through ocean currents. Coconuts are known for their versatility, and all parts of it have been used throughout history. The water is a popular energy boosting beverage, the oil has both health benefits and culinary use, and the husks can be used for storage and making rope.

Coconut
Cocos nucifera



Sales

Manufacturing: \$9,200,000(22nd)
 Consumer: Not in top 20



Pharmacology

The MCT's in coconut have been observed to have beneficial effects on the human body. Coconut oil can be used for diabetes, heart disease, chronic fatigue, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, Alzheimer's, thyroid conditions, energy, and boosting the immune system. Ironically, despite coconut oil's high calorie and saturated fat content, some people use it to lose weight and lower cholesterol.

Botany/Preparation

Most of the world's coconuts are cultivated in tropical regions of southern Asia. Coconuts are the fruit of the *Cocos nucifera*, a tall palm tree. Coconuts have three layers: a thin green outer skin, a center brown fibrous husk, and an inner hard brown shell. The inside of the coconut contains coconut water surrounded by a thick layer of white flesh. This flesh can be grated and pressed to create coconut milk, or processed further to make coconut oil.



References

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2. <http://www.agroforestry.net/images/pdfs/Cocos-coconut.pdf>