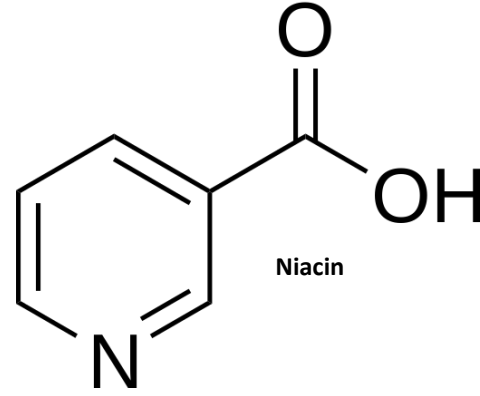
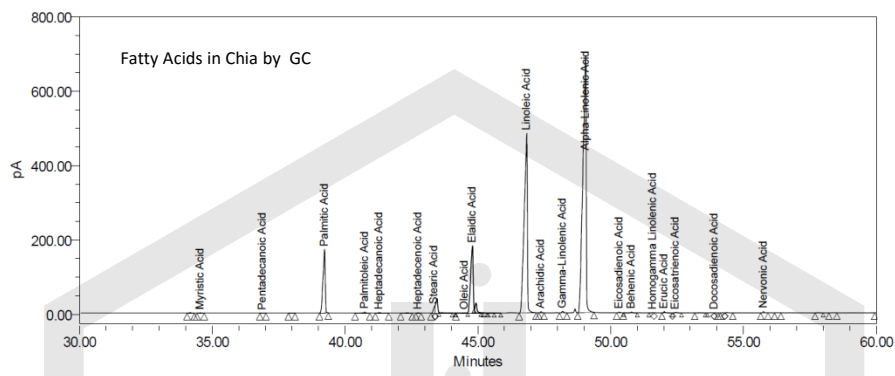




**Plant of the Month**  
 By Jonathan Crellin, Alkemist Labs  
 \\NAS\Station 15\Plant of the Month\



**Chemistry**

Chia seeds are a concentrated food containing omega-3 fatty acids, carbohydrates, protein, fiber, antioxidants, and calcium. The seeds yield 25-30% extractable oil, with  $\alpha$ -linolenic acid being the highest in concentration. Chia seeds are also a rich source of B vitamins thiamine (B<sub>1</sub>) and niacin (B<sub>3</sub>).

**Chia**

*Salvia hispanica*



**Sales**

Manufacturing: \$7,400,000 (25<sup>th</sup>)  
 Consumer: \$5,600,000 (12<sup>th</sup>)

**Botany/Preparation**

Chia is a species of flowering plant in the mint family, Lamiaceae. The seeds are an unprocessed, whole-grain food that can be absorbed by the body as seeds (unlike flaxseeds). They are most often sprinkled raw over food, or mixed into drinks and baked goods. They can also be mixed with water and made into a gel, or extracted for their oil.



**Pharmacology**

Infusions of whole chia seeds are believed to enhance the uptake of other medicines. Therefore, it is a component of many medicinal recipes. In theory, chia seeds are supposed to expand in your stomach, helping you to feel full, eat less, and ultimately lose weight.

**History/Traditional Use**

Chia was very important in pre-Columbian foods and beverages in Mexico. The seeds were roasted, ground into flour, and incorporated into tortillas, tamales, and beverages. A refreshing drink made with whole chia seeds became very popular after 1600 CE. The seeds of the plant were used as food, medicine, and oil. In the 80's, clay figurines used to sprout seeds became a popular novelty known as "Chia Pets."



## References

1. <http://cms.herbalgram.org/herbclip/269/review44017.html>
2. <http://www.webmd.com/diet/features/truth-about-chia#1>