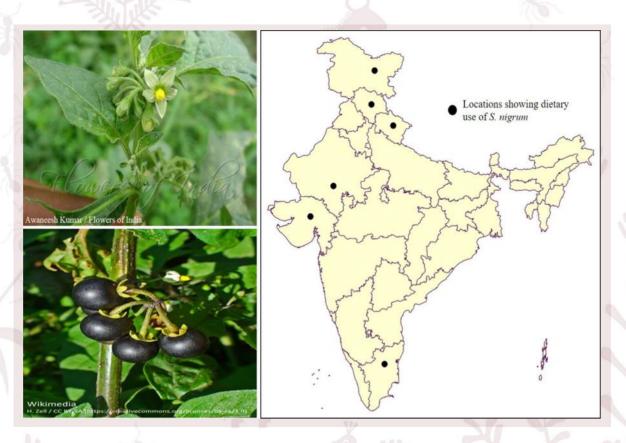


The magic berry belongs to the family of tomatoes, potatoes, and chilies, i.e., to Solanaceae. The plant is a shrub with appreciable antioxidant and vitamin levels; especially the leaves are rich in vitamins and minerals. Though unripe fruits contain 'solanine' and preferred to get matured before use, nutritional analysis reported a high protein, lipid, and crude fiber content along with vitamins (vitamin C, riboflavin, and thiamine) in fruits. It is widely known as 'Makoi' in the north of India as especially in the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh. In Kashmir, leaves are stir-fried in oil to prepare Kainkothi fry. In Gujarat and Rajasthan both leaves and fruits are popular food among the rural folks. At the opposite end of the country, it is often used with tamarind, coconut, and chili powder along with other regular spicy ingredients, especially by the Tamil brahmin community; where it is called Manathakkali or Marthangali. Moreover, in Tamil Nadu, the unripe fruits of this black berry can be seen spread on palm leaf mats for drying. They are treated with buttermilk and salt, fermented and dried under the sun. This dried 'Vattal' (chips) is an export item. In the developed countries, its use as the edible species is under-explored though sparingly welcomed for infusing diversity to the cuisines.



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