

Food Trends May 2011

Monk Fruit Gets Support

Manufacturers looking to reduce the sugar content of their products should check out monk fruit, which has been used for its sweet taste and healthy qualities for hundreds of years in China and Southeast Asia. The small, vine-grown, subtropical fruit gained the U.S. FDA's GRAS status in 2010 (which denotes food that is generally recognized as safe). It is packed with healthy antioxidants and vitamins, but it's the calorie-free sweetness that makes it an ideal ingredient for manufacturers. Powdered monk fruit concentrate is 150 to 200 times sweeter than sugar and its sweetness comes from unique natural antioxidants called mogrosides. Because it's concentrated, there's room to add other functional ingredients, like complex carbohydrates, fibers and whole grains.

New Zealand-based BioVittoria offers a GMO-free monk fruit, Sweet Delicious, cultivated exclusively by the company's network of growers, and has launched MonkFruit.org, an educational portal.