

Value Added Products from Persimmon a very Astringent Fruit Grown in Hilly Area of Uttarakhand

Persimmon or kaki belongs to the genus *Diospyros* of the family Ebenaceae. The persimmon cultivars are broadly classified into two major groups i.e. non-astringent and astringent varieties. *D. kaki* is also known as the Japanese persimmon and is the most important species. In Japan persimmon is known as the 'Fruit for God'. China, Japan and Korea account for about 95 % of the total world production. In India, persimmon is grown in Kullu valley and in Conoor in Nilgiris. It also grows in Uttarakhand, in Bhowali, Ramgarh, Mukhteshwar and adjoining areas where fruits are available from September to December. In Bhowali, persimmon is locally known as *kaku*.

Persimmons are generally light yellow-orange to dark red-orange in color and are very attractive.

They are high in glucose with a balanced protein profile. These fruits are good source of vitamin C, vitamin A, iron and dietary fibers. They are rich in manganese and contain other minerals like Ca, P, K, traces of Zn, Cu and amino acids. Persimmon is also a rich source of lycopene.

Persimmon possesses various medicinal properties. Lycopene present in it protects against prostate cancer. They are also good for anaemic, poor appetite and underdeveloped children. It is a good source of natural antioxidants and dietary fibres which are probably involved in the reduction of degenerative human diseases due to their antioxidative and free radical scavenging properties. Tannin also has antimutagenic and anticarcinogenic activity.

The fruit is mainly eaten fresh but can be frozen, canned, dried and can be converted into jam. Traditionally the Japanese and the Chinese have always peeled, cut and sun dried persimmons.

Persimmon grown in Uttarakhand is usually astringent. It is also not liked much by the consumers owing to its peculiar drying sensation and surface coating in the mouth when eaten.

Hence an attempt was made to utilize persimmon fruit in the development of value added products devoid of astringency.

Advantages:

Being an astringent fruit persimmon is not very popular as table fruit and so may be utilized in the processing Industry as its value added products have tremendous market potential on account of its numerous health and medicinal benefits.