

CRANBERRIES:

A BOON



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Introduction

Cranberries are a group of evergreen dwarf shrubs or trailing vines in the subgenus **Oxycoccus** of the genus *Vaccinium*. In Britain, cranberry may refer to the native species *Vaccinium oxycoccos*, while in North America; cranberry may refer to *Vaccinium macrocarpon*.

Cranberries are low, creeping shrubs or vines up to 2 metres (7 ft.) long and 5-20 cm (2-8 inches) in height, they have slender, wiry stems that are not thickly woody and have small evergreen leaves.



Figure: Cranberries

The flowers are dark pink, with very distinct reflexed petals, leaving the style and stamens fully exposed and pointing forward. They are pollinated by bees.

The fruit is a berry that is larger than leaves of the plant; it is initially white, but turns deep red when fully ripe. It is edible with an acidic taste that can overwhelm its sweetness.

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The observed COX-1 inhibition may also be relevant to cancer, since some evidence suggests that COX-1 specific inhibitors are as effective as COX-2 specific inhibitors in decreasing events related to tumour development.

Berry	COX-2 inhibitory potency %
Gooseberry	83
Blackberry	73
Sea buckthorn	73
Cranberry	73
Raspberry	43
Black currant	43
White currant	49
Serviceberry	38
Highbush blueberry	21
Velvet leaf blueberry	14

