

# Buffaloberry: Next Commercial 'Super Fruit,' Scientists Say

Nov 14, 2013 by Enrico de Lazaro

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According to a [study published in the \*Journal of Food Science\*](#), a little known fruit called buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*) might be successfully grown as a new commercial crop.



Buffaloberry, *Shepherdia argentea*. Image credit: Julia Adamson / CC BY-SA 3.0.

**Buffaloberry** is a deciduous thorny, thicket-forming shrub growing up to 6 tall. The shrub is a member of the olive family native to Western North



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America and is found on many Indian reservations, often where little else grows well.

The bright red fruit has a tart flavor, and has historically been used as a source of nutrients for many Native Americans.



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The sugar and acidity of the fruit make it desirable as a fresh or dried product. In addition to its potential health benefits, lycopenoate may also be used as a natural food colorant.

Recently the buffaloberry has drawn attention from several commercial wine producers.



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In the new study, lead author Dr Ken Riedl and his colleagues from the Ohio State University found that buffaloberries contain large amounts of lycopene and a related acidic compound, methyl-lycopenoate, which are important antioxidants and nutrients beneficial for human health.

“These plants produce fruits rich in carotenoid and phenolic antioxidants, which may have health benefits that may make buffaloberry commercially valuable,” the scientists wrote in the paper.



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“This species is adapted to poor soils and can tolerate drier climates. In the Dakotas, buffaloberry flourishes on the American Indian Tribal Reservation yielding copious amounts of health-beneficial fruit for fresh and processing markets, making it a potentially valuable new crop for marginal lands.”



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Bibliographic information: Riedl KM et al. Variation in Lycopene and Lycopenoates, Antioxidant Capacity, and Fruit Quality of Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea* [Pursh]Nutt.). *Journal of Food Science*, published online October 8, 2013; doi: 10.1111/1750-3841.12265

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