

Indulgence all natural: herbal extracts for spirits

Naturalness is a steadily growing trend in the food and beverage industry. Consumers are more interested than ever in natural products that are positioned as clean label, contain natural and plant-based ingredients, and are manufactured without preservatives. In this context, the market for plant-based products has experienced steady growth over the past two decades. Botanical extracts and their preparations are widely consumed as foods, food ingredients, dietary supplements and herbal medicines. They are also in demand for spirits, as botanical extracts give spirits more naturalness.

Herbs as popular flavour

Herbs provide beverages with a full, authentic flavour profile and convince with the subtle notes they bring. Fruit and herbal infusions such as mate, rooibos and ginger, which are predominantly known from the tea segment, are valued for their natural effects and, like coffee, are now also among the top 10 most sought-after flavours in other beverage segments such as beer and spirit mixes. In addition, mint and apple are among the fastest growing flavours in the spirits and spirit mixes category.

Herbs and fruits thus stand for new taste experiences in spirits and serve the consumer desire for more naturalness and authentic products. For spirits, the use of botanical extracts enables emotional positioning as well as storytelling, focusing on the origin and processing of the extracts used.

With numerous infusions, extracts and natural flavours, Döhler offers their customers a wide range of botanical products for use in spirits and spirit-mix beverages. This creates spicy, herbal or floral flavour profiles, cooling or warming sensations (for example, through mint or ginger), and drinks in vibrant colours (for example, through the use of turmeric) – all in their original form. All products are convincing in their authenticity and taste, ensuring delicious beverages with a natural flavour profile. In addition, claims such as “sugar-free”, “gluten-free” and “low allergens” are particularly important.

Naturalness & sugar reduction in the first place

Clean labeling is becoming increasingly important as food and beverage manufacturers seek to gain the trust of end consumers and provide transparency. In clean label products, the list of ingredients is reduced, the individual products are processed as little as possible, and their natural origin is clearly evident. Consumers can thus get a clear picture of a product, its ingredients and their origin. Organically grown products are also becoming increasingly important in consumer decision-making.

Clean label fruit extracts give alcoholic beverages such as spirits, mixed wine drinks, cider and mixed beer drinks an intense and well-rounded fruity flavour profile as well as a characteristic colour – without the addition of flavours or colorants.

The growing demand for clean label and organic products is also contributing to the popularity of botanical extracts. As consumers look for ways to avoid artificial flavours and colours, the use of botanical extracts is increasingly in demand in many non-alcoholic, as well as alcoholic beverages such as craft beer, cocktails and spirits. The refined flavour profiles offered by botanical extracts for spirits are created without the addition of sugar and therefore allow for a low-sugar formulation.

Wide range of applications

Botanical extracts are ideally suited for use in a variety of beverage applications – both non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages.

They are excellent for craft beers, for example, to which they add a touch of fruity, spicy, bitter or brown notes. Spirits such as Spanish or French brandy, as well as other dark variants, can be given an authentic woody or smoky flavour by means of extracts such as oak extract – without the laborious process of barrel aging. This creates the special aroma of an aged profile and warm, mild notes.

Complex designs

Excellent taste, authenticity and naturalness are important factors for the success of food and beverages. In spirits, herbal notes are particularly popular – juniper extract, angelica, cumin and basil are currently high on the list.¹

¹ GNPD Analysis

From angelica, the root is the most commonly used part, but some distillers also use the seeds and flowers. The root provides an earthy component that also binds and holds together other botanical flavours, providing the spirit flavour complexity and depth. Juniper is the basis of classic gin – but here, too, alternatives are becoming increasingly interesting. This is usually resorted to caraway or cumin. Hemp, citrus and apple are flavours that are clearly gaining in popularity. The taste of apple adds a delicate aroma to brandies, liqueurs and spirits, while lemon and orange peel are particularly suitable ingredients for gin. The peels add a pleasant spiciness and can also bring out other flavours.

As a global partner and driving force in the beverage industry, Döhler supplies not only high-quality natural ingredients but also a range of exciting concepts for refining spirits with natural extracts. With innovative all-in-one solutions, the company creates Multi-Sensory Experiences® that perfectly harmonize authentic taste and modern lifestyle.

About Doehler:

Doehler (www.doehler.com) is a global producer, marketer and provider of technology-driven natural ingredients, ingredient systems and integrated solutions for the food and beverage industry. Doehler's integrated approach and the broad product portfolio are the optimal basis for innovative and safe food & beverage applications. The product portfolio of natural ingredients ranges from natural flavours, natural colours, health ingredients, pulses & cereal ingredients, dairy & plant-based ingredients, fermented ingredients, dry fruit & vegetable ingredients, fruit & vegetable ingredients to ingredient systems.

Headquartered in Darmstadt, Germany, Doehler is active in over 130 countries and has more than 40 production sites, as well as sales offices and application centres on every continent. More than 7,000 dedicated employees provide our customers with fully integrated food & beverage solutions from concept to realisation.

“WE BRING IDEAS TO LIFE.” briefly describes Doehler's holistic, strategic and entrepreneurial approach to innovation. This comprises market intelligence, trend monitoring, the development of innovative products and product applications, advice on food safety and microbiology, food law as well as Sensory & Consumer Science.