

*Paullinia cupana*

[Synonyms : *Paullinia sorbilis*]

**GUARANA** (English, German, Portuguese) is an evergreen climbing vine. Native to tropical South America (particularly Brazil and Uruguay) it has small yellow flowers.

It is also known as Brazilian cocoa, Guarana bread, *Gvarano* (Esperanto), Paullinia, Uabano, Uaranzeiro, and Zoom.

*Cupana* is derived from a local South American name.

The seeds are washed then roasted for six hours and the shells removed. The shelled seeds are pulverized and made into a dough with water, and the dough is rolled into 8 in. long batons or bars and dried in the sun or an oven. These have a smell reminiscent of chocolate (*Theobroma cacao*) and a bitter then sweet taste.

Named after a German medical botanist who died in 1712, guarana is the source of a national drink in Brazil, *cola*. In the belief that it prevented disease guarana has been drunk in great quantity, particularly by Brazilian miners. By grating powder (from a roll of the dried seed paste) into sugar and water, a refreshing and stimulating, caffeinated tea-like beverage is produced. (The dried paste is also smoked and the wood burnt on the hot fire needed for this is more often than not golden spoon, *Byrsonima crassifolia*.)

It is believed that some of the South American Indian tribes have been cultivating guarana for thousands of years. Tribes living near the Orinoco have made guarana into a diet drink by fermenting the seeds in cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) and water.

Medicinally, it has been recommended as a remedy for headaches, and it has been used by American Indians for treating bowel complaints.