

PREFERENCE, NEOPHOBIA AND NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF A WILD FRUIT "LENDJ" (*ARBUTUS UNEDO L.*) FROM ALGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In Algeria, wild berries *Arbutus unedo L.*, known as "lendj" remain unexploited and little studies have been devoted to it. The presented work aims at, on the hand, studying the physicochemical and phytochemical characteristics of the fruit, on the other hand, conducting a survey of a school population of children aged 6 to 11 years old and adolescents aged 12 to 17 years old to determine the level of neophobia and preference of this fruit. The results show that lendj, with a carbohydrate content of 19.80%, which make it as an energetic fruit (100g lendj gives 103.47 kilocalories), as well as its riches in polyphenols (17.58 ± 0.04 mg EAG/g extract) and fibers (16%) attribute it a nutrient bioactive property feature. The acceptability of this fruit by the majority of the study population shows a mean preference score of 4.84, a rate which encourage its exploitation.

KEYWORDS: *Arbutus unedo L.* (lendj), Neophobia, Physicochemical Characteristics, Phytochemicals, Preference