

# HERBALIST

## Stevia– the Sugar Herb

A plant native from North through to South America, Stevia rebaudiana has been used for centuries to sweeten bitter beverages, medicines and also herbal teas including the popular South American Yerba Mate tea. The leaves have also been simply chewed for their sweet taste.

Stevia is a subtropical, shrub-like perennial herb growing up to 90cm tall. Small, dainty white flowers are produced up the stems of the plant amongst the green, oval-shaped leaves. A pleasure and quite a novelty to have in the garden, my own children have taken great delight over the years in picking off a few leaves when out in the garden to have as a sweet herbal treat. The leaves contain properties up to 300 times sweeter than sugar.



Stevia is constantly growing in popularity for its zero calorie value, sweet taste and use as a sweetener, sugar replacement, flavour enhancer and in the production of weight loss beverages and foods. It is ideal for diabetics and those requiring low carbohydrate alternatives. Stevia assists with blood sugar regulation, sugar cravings, mood swings, improves energy levels, assists digestion and helps maintain a feeling of well-being. It nourishes and strengthens various organs of the body including the liver, kidneys, heart and blood vessels.

As a natural and tasty alternative, Stevia is available in a variety of convenient forms including dissolvable tablets and powdered extracts to suit personal dietary needs and sweetening requirements.



### **Karen**

Dip.Med.Herb.

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