

Goji taunts North American farmers



The berry, cultivated in China and said to convey health benefits, is eagerly sought in the West. Growers here are trying but are discovering they have much to learn.

Reporting from Dinuba, Calif. -- Can it be that *goji*, the supposed legendary miracle fruit of ancient Tibet, is being grown in Dinuba? Nothing is surprising when it comes to this tiny orange berry. Virtually unknown in the United States five years ago, it is now seemingly everywhere, in martinis, granolas, nutritional supplements and even Lindsay Lohan's tanning spray.

But so far this much-hyped "superfruit," so trendy and expensive, has been available only in processed form, in imported juices, powders and dried berries; the fresh berries themselves, eagerly sought by aficionados, have been unobtainable in the U.S.

"I almost fell over when I heard the Burkarts will have fresh *goji*," said **Akasha Richmond**, who features the dried berries at her Akasha restaurant in Culver City. "I'm crossing my fingers."

<http://www.latimes.com/features/food/la-fo-goji5-2009aug05,0,1276183.story>