

CWSF 2019 - Fredericton, New Brunswick



Karihothettha Cupples

Cedar Tea

Challenge: Health

Category: Senior

Region: Aboriginal Québec Autochtone

City: Kanehsatake, QC

School: Ratihente High School

Abstract: I studied the traditional preparation of cedar tea and analyzed its potential germ killing capacities. Specifically I tested for the presence of vitamin C and tested growth of bacteria in the presence of the tea. This is important towards understanding the scientific reasons for the traditional practice and can improve people's health and wellness.

Biography

My whole life, I have been actively learning about my Mohawk (Kaniekheha) culture. I attend our longhouse for ceremonies, sing traditional songs and speak with elders in my community to learn our history and our language. Doing a science project on our ancient practice of drinking cedar tea as medicine was a logical next step, combining my cultural practices with my passion for science. Ideally, I would like to fully analyze the biochemical components of the tea and do testing on its potential health benefits. I think that looking at whether cedar tea could increase people's iron levels (since vitamin C is known to help absorb iron) would be an interesting experiment. Could the vitamin be more easily absorbed than in a pill form? It would also be intriguing to see if our use of the tea for easing cold and flu symptoms could be proven to be effective in a human trial. Furthermore, could this tea work on other ailments? I would tell students that doing a science project that is personally important to them, like mine is to myself, makes it very motivating and satisfying. Especially if it motivates their potential career or lifestyle.