

FOOD

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SUPERMARKET SLEUTH

Yerba mate only seems new; it's been around for 500 years

You can't turn around in the stores these days without running into a product considered the newest thing, only to find that it has been around somewhere in the world for years. Case in point is caa or yerba mate, a tea-like leaf that comes from the evergreen tree *ilex paraguariensis*, indigenous to Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. Stories of its use date to before the 1500s, and nowadays it's a \$400 million agricultural industry that produces more than 300,000 tons a year.

The tree is a member of the holly family, and its leaves are tough and leathery. They're processed into a brown, tea-like product that contains caffeine as well as vitamins, minerals, amino acids and antioxidants.

I recently heard about a company named Pixie Mate whose product line includes several "mate" beverage options. Their Mate Concentrates are sold in 32-ounce cartons for \$3.99, and they're made to mix with milk, soy milk or anything you choose. They sell eight flavors in filter bags you brew like regular tea bags, and three of those flavors are also sold in loose leaf packages. The filter bags come in boxes of 20 and retail for \$3.79; the loose tea is sold in 8-ounce bags that retail for \$6.49.

Pixie Mate products are



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sold in natural food stores such as Wild Oats and Whole Foods, or you can order them online through the company's Web site, www.pixiemate.com.



PURE CHOCOLATE

If you're a fan of chocolate sauce, you might want to try Somebody's

Mother's Chocolate Sauce. The dessert topping was created by Houston native Lynn Lasher, who retired from a 20-year career in financial services. She began the company with her three children.

I tried the sauce and was pleasantly surprised that it is not as overwhelmingly sweet as some chocolate sauces on the market today.

It doesn't contain additives or preservatives, and would be great on ice cream, with fruit, or on a spoon right out of the jar.

The sauce is not available in stores locally that I can find, but you can buy it on the company's Web site, www.somebodysmothers.com for \$9 for a 9½-ounce jar.

Product suggestions? Tips? E-mail rboggs@arkansasonline.com

