

Algae-Growing Nuns In Central African Grow Spirulina For Malnourished Children

Many people believe the word “superfood” is a term used for click bait and nothing more, but superfoods not only exist, they are the superheroes of the food world. Spirulina is one such food.

In the Central African Republic, Catholic nuns are using the blue-green algae to fight malnutrition at the St. Joseph Health Center. Bangui, where the nuns are located, has been dealing with the effects of a conflict that has made resources scarce. The lack of food has had an especially pronounced effect on children in the region.

After a meeting with a French pharmacist who advised them on how to grow spirulina, the nuns at St Joseph Health Center were able to successfully harvest the algae to combat malnutrition.

Spirulina is a remarkable source of nutrients, containing the highest natural source of complete proteins, omega fatty acids, iron, and antioxidants. The health applications of a superfood like spirulina can translate across countless circumstances, from saving lives in the Central African Republic to providing everyday nutrients to anyone around the world.



Nuns at the St. Joseph Health Centre in Bangui, Central African Republic, grow their own algae as a supplement for malnourished children who have suffered the ravages of war since 2013. Photo by Sebastian Rich

Working Smarter – and Making a Difference

The number of children who suffer from severe malnutrition in the Central African Republic is on the rise. Compared to last year, reported cases of acute malnutrition have tripled as conflicts in the region leave families unable to plant crops, to earn a living, or to access sanitation, clean water, and health care. Provisions from aid organizations are an inconsistent food source, as security issues often keep the protein supplements from reaching their intended targets. These are the struggles facing the nuns at St Joseph as they care for vulnerable children and mothers.

Spirulina has given them an inexpensive, effective, and reliable way to feed the people who come to the health center. Once a solution to the malnutrition problem presented itself, the nuns obtained the materials to build the algae tanks from the community through begging and borrowing. People are paying attention to St Joseph Health Center because of how effective the spirulina has been and the inspiring initiative shown by the nuns who work there.

The sisters at St. Joseph are proud of how many children they are able to help. After such great results, others in the Central African Republic and areas beyond who suffer from malnutrition see the sisters as both an inspiration and a source of practical knowledge.

Why Spirulina is Awesome

Most people are familiar with algae. It's the murky, clingy, dingy green stuff in ponds and dirty aquariums. Unappetizing as it sounds, spirulina is among the most nutritious foods on the planet with 18 vitamins and minerals, 8 amino acids, chlorophyll, antioxidants, and essential fatty acids. The stuff is loaded. In addition to that goodness, its soft cell walls make it easy to digest. It also absorbs heavy metals and toxins. Eating algae plain might not be for the squeamish, but a quality green nutrition powder can give you the benefits of spirulina without the slime.

Spirulina is incredibly eco-friendly; it yields 25% more nutrition per square foot than any other plant. If you find yourself inspired by the nuns at St Joseph and want to try some DIY spirulina at home, the Internet is here to help. Great DIY tutorials like the one here can get you started on a window aquarium filled with spirulina. It may take more than one try to get it to work, but, in time, you'll be able to guarantee a quality supply of homegrown spirulina, perfect for survival and prepping, too! The use of spirulina in the

Central African Republic has shown the great impact it can have on health. This Total Nutrition Formula is the perfect recipe for your spirulina, and it's the best multi-vitamin/mineral/protein supplement I know of. Even if building an algae farm isn't a viable option, finding a quality source of it can give you access to even better health.

Recommended Supplements:

- Shillington's Total Nutrition Formula

Further Reading:

- *Total Nutrition – Make your own Homemade Multivitamin and Mineral Formula*
- *Top 5 Foods that Detox Heavy Metals and Toxins*

Sources:

- *Algae-growing nuns in Central African Republic fight malnutrition with ingenuity – PBS.org*
- *To Fight Malnutrition, These African Nuns Grow Protein-Rich Spirulina Behind Their Health Clinic – True Activist*
- *Press release Three times more children treated for severe acute malnutrition in Bangui hospital than this time last year – UNICEF*
- *Food of the Future: Window DIY Spirulina Superfood – Instructables*