



Plants & Economics

The people's choice

Tea

Camellia sinensis

Why it was chosen

Tea has long been a valuable commodity. It was first imported to Europe in the 17th century and was so vastly expensive that large quantities were smuggled into the country.

India is the largest global producer and consumer of tea today, followed by China, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Indonesia.

What it is

Tea is a member of the *Theaceae* family and is related to the evergreen ornamental camellias that we grow in our gardens.

The beverage we know as tea is made from the dried leaves and leaf buds of the plant.

There are more than 3000 varieties of tea available, and each has its own distinct character.

Where it grows

Tea can be grown from the equator right up to Northern China and Japan.

Soil, altitude and weather conditions affect the flavour of the tea that is produced. The tea plant requires well-drained soil, and can produce good tea for 50–70 years.

Did you know?

Tea is drunk by more people and in greater quantities than any beverage except water.

What the scientists say

Tea contains high levels of chemicals called antioxidants. These have several benefits for human health, including reducing the risk of certain cancers and the maintenance of healthy brain cells.

By understanding how antioxidants are produced in plants, scientists can boost the health benefits of everyday food and drink.

The logo for 'Plants & Us' is located in the bottom right corner. It features the words 'Plants' and '& Us' in a bold, sans-serif font, with the ampersand being significantly larger and more stylized than the other characters.