

## Consumer acceptability and sensory profiling of Rhododendron cider vinegar

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### ABSTRACT

*Rhododendron arboreum* (Burans) was used to develop a value-added cider vinegar infused with mint and basil to enhance flavour and health benefits. Sensory evaluation and consumer acceptability were assessed through hedonic, JAR, and CATA tests with 400 respondents. Results revealed significant differences among samples ( $F = 91.15$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The 12% basil-infused vinegar (B3) achieved the highest overall liking ( $5.56 \pm 1.25$ ), while the 12% mint–basil blend (C3) was least accepted ( $3.58 \pm 1.01$ ). Consumers associated positive attributes such as good aroma, taste, and appearance, while negative feedback included offensive odour and dull colour. Overall, basil-infused rhododendron vinegar demonstrated high acceptance, with aroma and colour being key drivers of preference. According to these findings, rhododendron cider vinegar has a great chance of becoming a commercial product and being well-liked by consumers in a variety of market niches, especially when it is infused with basil at the right amounts.

**Keywords:** CATA, JAR, consumers, sensory evaluation vinegar;