

Reading and Talking

Make bears run away

Recently, bears come closer to where people live, so farmers and hikers meet bears more often. Now, “Tree Work,” a company in Aomori Prefecture, makes “Kuma Nigeru” (Bears Run Away). Kuma Nigeru is a juice that is made with very spicy chili peppers and a vinegar that comes from burned wood. If you put the strong-smelling juice on a sponge or cloth and carry it, bears and other wild animals stay away from you. A 300-milliliter bottle of Kuma Nigeru is 5,296 yen.

(90 words)

Have you ever heard of “Kuma Nigeru” (Bears Run Away)?

↳Yes, I have. (--When and where did you hear about it? / Do you need it? / Do you use a mosquito spray or cockroach spray at home?)

↳No, I haven't. (--Do you think it works well? / What's your favorite smell? / What's your least favorite food smell?)

Do “tanuki” racoon dogs live in your neighborhood?

↳Yes, they do. / Kind of. (--Have you ever seen them? / Are there “kiji” pheasants around your house? / Are there snakes in your neighborhood?)

↳No, they don't. (--Are there “suzume” sparrows? / Are there “karasu” crows? / Can you hear “kaeru” frogs around your house?)

Do you like going for a hike?

↳Yes, I do. / Kind of. (--Have you gone for a hike recently? / Have you ever gone for a long walk in the city? / Do you like walking in the countryside?)

↳No, I don't. (--How come you don't like it? / Do you like riding a bicycle? / Do you like going for a drive?)

(25 September, 2020)

More Information

Make bears run away

Recently, bears have been coming closer to where people live, and there are more cases of farmers encountering bears in their fields. Bears are also a worry for hikers. What should you do if you meet a bear? Lie down and play dead? Try to punch it in the nose? Luckily, there may be a safer solution.

“Tree Work,” a company in Aomori Prefecture, has developed a bear repellent called “Kuma Nigeru” (Bears Run Away). It’s made with capsaicin, an extract from extremely spicy Indian chilis called bhut jolokia, or ghost peppers. The capsaicin is mixed with wood vinegar, a dark, dense byproduct of charcoal production. If you carry a sponge or cloth that is soaked with the pungent solution, bears and other wild animals avoid you. You can also keep bears out of the area by placing an open container of the solution by a trail.

This year, Tree Work has gotten twice as many orders for Kuma Nigeru as last year. Employees have been hard at work shipping it to those who have to work in the mountains, or who go there to enjoy nature. A 300-milliliter bottle costs ¥5,296.

(198 words)

(25 September, 2020)

Reading and Talking

A new soy milk yogurt

Yogurt is a fermented food like miso, natto, sake, soy sauce, and cheese. Yogurt is made from cow's milk. How does milk become yogurt? The reason is something called lactic acid. You can also get lactic acid from land plants and animals. This lactic acid is used to make soy milk yogurt. Now, scientists in Shizuoka Prefecture have made a soy milk yogurt with lactic acid from "katsuo" bonito. They hope their bonito lactic acid soy milk is going to become a popular product from Suruga Bay.

(95 words)

Do you think "katsuo nyuusankin" bonito lactic acid soy milk yogurt is going to be popular?

↳Yes, I do. / Kind of. (--Have you ever eaten soy milk yogurt? / Have you ever eaten soy milk ice cream? / Do you drink soy milk?)

↳No, I don't. (--How come you don't think so? / Are you allergic to milk? / Do you like bonito?)

Do you eat yogurt every day?

↳Yes, I do. (--How do you eat yogurt? / Do you always buy the same yogurt? / Have you ever made yogurt at home?)

↳No, I don't. (--Do you like cheese? / Do you think you get enough calcium? / Have you ever broken your arm or leg?)

Do you eat natto fermented soybeans?

↳Yes, I do. / Kind of. (--How do you eat natto? / Do you eat natto for lunch? / Do you think natto goes well with spaghetti?)

↳No, I don't. (--Do you like tofu? / How often do you have miso soup? / Did you use soy sauce yesterday?)

(25 September, 2020)

More Information

A new soy milk yogurt

Yogurt is a fermented food like miso paste, natto fermented soybeans, sake, soy sauce, and cheese. During fermentation, microorganisms, such as yeast and bacteria, convert carbohydrates, such as starch and sugar, into alcohol or acid. For example, to turn milk into yogurt, bacteria that are called probiotics ferment the milk by turning its lactose sugars into lactic acid. The lactic acid is what causes the milk to thicken and taste tart.

It is also possible to use lactic acid to turn soy milk into yogurt. The lactic acid that is used to do this is extracted from plants and animals. Low-calorie, low-fat soy milk yogurt is gaining popularity among health-conscious people, and with those who are allergic to cow's milk.

This brings us to our Hot Topic: Lactic acid is usually extracted from land, not sea, plants and animals. However, a research institution in Shizuoka Prefecture has successfully developed a soy milk yogurt with lactic acid from "katsuo" bonito. It hopes that the bonito lactic acid soy milk is going to become a new specialty from Suruga Bay.

(185 words)

(25 September, 2020)