

# **AS FOOD, YET!**

## **New Vogue Seen For Sunflower**

By JOHN F. HUSSEY

MOBILE, Ala. (UPI)--It may not be long before products of the sunflower form an important part of the American diet.

This is the opinion of the Rev. Robert Owens-Howard, a Jesuit biologist, who says the once-rejected sunflower is enjoying a new vogue.

The sunflower, if properly cultivated and efficiently harvested, "is a highly nourishing and potentially great food source," says Father Owens-Howard. And it tastes good, too.

The Jesuit, who has made special studies of the plant, found there are nutritional benefits to be derived from almost every part of the sunflower.

The seed has more protein than soybeans or cottonseed. It also contains vitamin D, calcium, thiamine and niacin. When pressed, the seed yields oil for cooking, margarine and salad. Ground up, it produces flour.

Father Owens-Howard says Americans have chewed the nut-like seed for years without realizing its food value. Only recently have scientists come to know of the plant's potential.

The sunflower has no waste. The stalks can be made into food or processed into paper or fertilizer; the roots of one variety can be used for baking or in salads. There are more than 100 varieties of sunflower plants.

"In a generation or so," Father Owens-Howard said, "the plant could be one of the world's most important food crops, especially since it grows almost anywhere the sun can reach it and the temperature does not get too cold."

Actually, the Jesuit says the sunflower is too much of a good thing. It's difficult to handle commercially because of its size, often more than six feet tall.

At present there is no mechanical equipment to harvest it. He thinks industry could develop new and adequate equipment or scientists could develop a smaller plant.

"The time may come," he says, "when the United States can offer a handful or sunflower seed to an impoverished country rather than millions of U.S. dollars."