



## BUSINESS PROFILE



### TWIGS NATURALS

<https://twignaturals.com/>

📍 Trinidad and Tobago

## ABOUT TWIGS NATURALS

- **Company status:** Limited Liability Company
- **Year of registration:** 2016
- **Number of employees:** 4 employees
- **Business sector:** Processing and sale of teas, seasonings and essential oils



**Nigel Jordan,**  
Co-Founder and CEO

Nigel Jordan co-founded Twigs Naturals with Cheryl-Ann Baptiste. Building on over 20 years' experience in the telecoms industry and web application development (including

e-services and e-commerce websites), Nigel participated in the Business Hatchery Programme hosted by the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI), and has become a certified tea specialist of the Specialty Tea Institute, USA. As the CEO of Twigs Naturals, he oversees all the company's production processes with the support of the board of family members.

### Mission/vision

Twigs Naturals is committed to sustainably produce high-quality products – mainly teas and seasonings – and to work closely with its local suppliers who use natural and sustainable farming methods.

This series of events is organised by IICA and COLEACP.

COLEACP operates within the framework of development cooperation between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the European Union (European Development Fund – EDF), with the support of the French Development Agency (AFD).



## CONTEXT

### Background

Nigel had the idea of using local ingredients from Trinidad and Tobago to produce tea after creating a tea bag with herbs from his garden together with his son for a school craft project. Nigel grew some crops and herbs in his house garden, like his parents did, to provide food to their family even during the difficult economic times of the 1980s.

Despite family and friends considering that preparing tea with local ingredients couldn't be successful, the business grew from strength to strength. The activities of Twigs Naturals were launched in 2014, and the first prototypes of homemade tea bags were well appreciated by locals. Within a few months, the company was using different techniques to manufacture products that showcase the unique and natural taste of local ingredients. Twigs Naturals was formally established as a Limited Liability Company in 2016.

### Position in the market

Twigs Naturals is the first Caribbean tea brand to be internationally rewarded.

### Relationships

Twigs Naturals works closely with local suppliers from the Paramin region of Trinidad and other areas. Each region brings its own unique twist to the flavour profile. Together, the company and the farmers strive to continuously produce high quality ingredients and to achieve a consistent supply of raw materials. This collaboration provides a reliable source of income to the farmers.

As a social company, Twigs Naturals aims to generate wealth for the local communities, including by hiring staff, mainly single mothers, whose other job opportunities often do not provide a decent wage.

## PRODUCTS AND MARKETS

### Main products

Twigs Naturals produces 100% natural herbal teas without any preservatives or additives. Its wide range of 18 teas includes flavours such as garlic, lemongrass, orange peel, mint, soursop, turmeric, ginger, moringa and West Indian bay leaf. The company also produces blended teas combining several flavours, such as ginger and turmeric (Zing

Tea); West Indian bay leaves and orange peel (Carnelian Tea); orange peel and coconut (Pina Colada); lemongrass, Trinitario cocoa and coconut (Lemongrass Cocoa); and an award-winning blend of wild hibiscus and anise seeds (Caribbean Christmas Tea). Four of the blended teas are trademark blends.



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Twigs Naturals also produces dried seasonings that are 100% natural, with no salt, monosodium glutamate (MSG) or additives. The six seasonings are dried Spanish thyme (Cuban oregano or Indian borage), dried ginger, dried rosemary, dried lemongrass, pimento flakes and garlic flakes, providing a Caribbean flavour for every dish.



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Twigs Naturals also produces blended oils for aromatherapy.

All products are prepared, blended and packaged by hand in the company's facility by certified staff, according to the international agricultural standards Preventive Controls Qualified Individuals (PCQI) and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP).

Teas and seasonings are packaged in resealable, reusable packaging made from recyclable materials: bags are made from recycled paper, and labels are made using post-consumer paper with soy-based prints. Each bag has a reusable seal, which guarantees a product a shelf life of 2 years (without refrigeration). This ensures the first teabag is just as fresh and bursting with flavour as the last teabag in the pack.

Production is managed by an in-house paperless bespoke production management system that tracks yield of raw materials, manages the workflow and accepts orders from distributors.

## Main markets

Twigs Naturals' products are sold on both local and international markets. The products are available in several stores across Trinidad and Tobago, as well as local restaurants and hotels.

These Caribbean products are also available at the international airport of Trinidad and Tobago, and can be exported worldwide as customers are able to order them via the website.



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## Main services

In addition to its regular products, Twigs Naturals also produces:

- branded products for specific events
- custom-branded merchandise, product hampers and gift sets
- self-service tea stations using compostable cups, covers, thermal sleeves and napkins, for conference rooms, waiting rooms or events.



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## Certifications

All products are gluten-free. The brand is also the proud holder of Halaal Certification from Darul Uloom Trinidad & Tobago: Institute of Higher Islamic Studies & Secondary Education.

Twigs Naturals has Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) certification, as well as Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), and its staff are Preventive Controls Qualified Individuals (PCQI) of the US Food and Drug Administration.

## INNOVATIONS: MILESTONES AND EXPANSION PLANS

### Milestones

Twigs Natural's CEO Nigel Jordan has taken part in several business and tea training courses to better understand the entrepreneurial and tea-making processes. The company has also benefited from support by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), including with its Local Green-Blue Enterprise Radar, a tool designed to help small and micro businesses in local communities to assess how they are providing benefits and good governance, and where they can improve.

Since 2018, Twigs Naturals operates in a new plant, the original one having become too small for the increased scale of operation.

The company has developed an environmental friendly and resources-conscious business model, and is committed to minimising water, soil and air pollution across its production chain. It has, for example, implemented a waste management system within its production processes to reduce its water consumption. Twigs Naturals also composts the organic waste from processing.

As a means of adapting to the new normal post-COVID-19 times, Twigs Naturals welcomed its first cohort of interns in October 2021. Holding

firm to the mission to provide opportunities for young people, Virtual Internships International, in collaboration with the prestigious Misk Foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, organised five internships with the company in the fields of Finance, Economics, Financial Planning & Reporting, and Human Resources.

In an effort to promote growth and diversification of the economy, Trinidad & Tobago's export development company, exporTT, has invited Twigs Naturals to be part of its inaugural Export Booster Initiative. The programme delivers specialised training and coaching by experienced industry professionals.

### Needs for upscaling

Twigs Naturals wants to work with more farmers to meet growing demand for its lemongrass, rosemary, turmeric, thyme and ginger teas.

The company is also expanding both its retail and online presence to increase sales, and so needs to hire more staff and/or increase salaries. Twigs Naturals is planning to export to Canada, Switzerland and West Africa to invest in new regional markets.

## SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Twigs Naturals is the first Caribbean tea company to have won international awards. Its Caribbean Christmas Tea and Mint Tea were placed second and third, respectively, at the 2017 Global Tea Championship in Colorado, USA. Twigs Naturals also won the 2017 Start Up Entrepreneur Special Award at EY Trinidad and Tobago's Champions of Business Awards; and was a finalist in the 2018 Excellence in Manufacturing Awards (Small Category) of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association.

In November 2021, Twigs Naturals was one of 10 export businesses from Trinidad and Tobago that participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual China International Import Expo (CIIE), one of the world's most important and innovative events to strengthen international cooperation in trade and investment.

The company uses social media intensively to increase its customer reach and sales. Its Facebook and Instagram accounts are visited hundreds of times per day, and customers from these social platforms account for about 60% of its total customers.

As a green and inclusive company, Twigs Naturals has positive economic and social impacts as it provides a reliable source of income for farmers and its staff. The company also gives back to the community by donating items to groups working with vulnerable people. It strongly supports the Vetiver Education and Empowerment Project (VEEP) of the Paramin region to promote the use of vetiver grass. This plant can be used as a natural retaining wall along hilly slopes, and its leaves are used for handicrafts. Twigs Naturals now works with skilled vetiver artisans and sells their products.