

Benefits of Hydrangea Root



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Healthy
Focus

You are all familiar with this ornamental plant and I imagine for many of you, colorful hydrangeas adorn your gardens. But did you now that these beautiful flowers also have a number of potential health benefits?

While scientific research into the benefits of the plant is rare, there is plenty of historical and anecdotal evidence to support its use. **It is primarily used to treat urinary tract infections, kidney stones and for a variety of autoimmune disorders.** If you are interested in learning more about the benefits of this wonderful plant, please read on.

SOME HYDRANGEA FACTS

Hydrangea belongs to a genus of some 70 species in the plant family – Hydrangeaceae. **When it comes to their therapeutic uses, each species of the plant has its own properties which can vary slightly from plant to plant.**

The most familiar species in the U.S is Hydrangea arborescens – this species also known as wild hydrangea and seven barks is native to North America. The hydrangea species used in traditional Chinese medicine is Chang Shan.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF HYDRANGEA ROOT

Like so many of nature's plants, hydrangea is far more than just an ornamental flower. **Although the leaves are toxic and should not be consumed, its roots and its rhizomes contain a wide variety of phytochemicals. They also contain several important nutrients like selenium, calcium, magnesium and zinc.**

Hydrangeas also contain several compounds that can benefit a person's health in various ways. **One such substance known as hydrangin is a phytochemical substance which has been the subject of scientific research.** It is believed that hydrangin is the compound responsible for the plant's ability to treat kidney stones. Hydrangeas also contain several other therapeutic compounds including naturally occurring flavonoids with excellent antioxidant benefits. **Antioxidants are valuable to our health since they protect us from the oxidative stress that underpins many diseases.**

The various constituents found in hydrangea root confer certain therapeutic properties. **These properties mean that the root may help treat a variety of different illnesses as well as taking care of your general health.**

- **Diuretic Properties** : According to research, hydrangea root has natural diuretic properties. A **diuretic** is a substance that helps increase urine production and promote more frequent urination. **Diuretics are prescribed to treat various illnesses and hydrangea root might be a safe and more natural alternative.**
- **Anti-inflammatory Properties** : Hydrangea root contains certain alkaloid compounds with an effect on the body similar to prescription medications like **NSAIDs**. **Because of these compounds, hydrangea root can help ease inflammation in the body both internally and externally.**
- **Antilithic Properties** : These properties mean that hydrangea root **can help to dissolve kidney stones and gallbladder stones**. It also makes the plant potentially effective against muscle calcification and bone spurs.
- **Antioxidant Properties** : Hydrangea root contains several natural antioxidants. Antioxidants play a vital role in human health. **They can help protect against the damage done by free radicals and may even help reverse cell damage.** Antioxidants also play a role in slowing down the aging process and can help prevent many of the cosmetic signs of aging like **wrinkles** and other skin blemishes.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF HYDRANGEA ROOT

KIDNEY STONES

One of the popular traditional uses for hydrangea root was to help treat painful kidney and gallbladder stones. **Hydrangea root has what are known as antilithic properties meaning that it can help dissolve unwanted deposits of calcium in the body.**

When it comes to bones and teeth, calcification is important but when soft tissues calcify, it causes painful problems such as gallstones and kidney stones. **Traditionally, hydrangea root has been used to help remove these calcium deposits from the kidney and the gallbladder and also to remove soft tissue calcification in general.**

Softening and dissolving these stones is a gradual process which is accomplished by a compound called hydrangin – a glycoside found in hydrangea root. **After the stones have softened, the pain is relieved and the stones can pass more comfortably without causing any further damage.**

The use of hydrangea root to dissolve painful kidney stones was well documented by the famous 20th century physician and herbalist Dr. Edward E Shook. He explains that one of his patients was suffering badly from sharp kidney stones that under x-ray could be seen piercing the patient's ureter. **After being treated with hydrangea root, these painful stones were passed naturally**

without causing any further damage but the stones passed were round and smooth. By dissolving the sharp edge of these stones, pain and inflammation is eased and the stones can pass more comfortably.

URINARY TRACT DISORDERS

Although there is no scientific evidence to back it up, hydrangea root has been used in traditional folk medicine for centuries to treat urinary tract and bladder infections.

FOR AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS

Unfortunately, there are not many recent studies into the health benefits of hydrangea root and we have to rely largely on anecdotal evidence and traditional use. **However, some more recent research has been done into the plant's effects on autoimmune disorders.**

According to this research, hydrangea root has potential to treat a variety of autoimmune problems including inflammatory bowel disease, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. It may also help with common skin conditions like psoriasis and eczema.

Autoimmune disorders are extremely common and occur when the immune system over reacts, attacking the body's own healthy cells. To get very technical, they occur when the body creates variations of the Th17 T-cells but here is hope on the horizon.

One study published in 2009 indicates that a compound found in hydrangea called halofuginone could help treat and prevent the symptoms of these conditions. In the study, mice with autoimmune disorders were treated with the compound. **The researchers concluded that halofuginone could selectively inhibit the production of the harmful Th17 cells while not affecting the body's beneficial T-cells. (1)**

The discovery that the plant may be an effective treatment for autoimmune disorders came as a significant breakthrough for scientist since all other treatments work by suppressing the immune system. **Of course, by suppressing the body's immune system, the risk of illness and infection is increased.**

According to Dr. Mark Sundrud, a researcher from Harvard Medical School :

'This is really the first description of a small molecule that interferes with autoimmune pathology but is not a general immune suppressant'

DETOX THE SYSTEM

Hydrangea root has long been used to detoxify the system naturally allowing your organs to function as well as they can. It is important that we detox every now and again much like we service our car. Failing to do so can put a great deal of stress on your liver meaning that our bodies are not in the best shape. **Hydrangea root has naturally diuretic properties which can help increase the**

production of urine helping you flush any harmful toxins from the body.

ANTIOXIDANT BENEFITS

Hydrangea root extract has excellent antioxidant properties that can do wonders for your overall health and protect against a host of illnesses.

Because we are bombarded daily by environmental free radicals that damage our cells, it is important to redress the balance by getting as many antioxidants into the system as possible.

Antioxidants can help protect you against oxidative stress and also delay some of the signs that the body is aging like wrinkles.

A Japanese study published in 2003 concluded that hydrangea root was a very powerful antioxidant. In fact, they noted that it was even more powerful and effective than turmeric and milk thistle combined. Given that turmeric is a very well-known and powerful antioxidant, that gives you some idea of the potential of hydrangea root.

HOW TO USE HYDRANGEA ROOT

The roots and the rhizomes of the plant are used medicinally and hydrangea root is available in several different forms. **These include dried root, liquid extract and tinctures. You can use the dried root to make a hot tea or infusion and drink it up 2 or 3 times a day.**

The recommended dose is between two and four grams of dried root up to three times each day. Make sure that you read any labeling instructions if you buy any form of hydrangea root extract and speak with your doctor if you have any doubts.

Hydrangea root is generally considered safe if taken in the recommended dose for a few weeks at a time. It may not be safe if it is used for more than a few weeks at a time.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HYDRANGEA ROOT?

Most everyone is familiar with the hydrangea plant but far fewer will be aware of its health benefits. While the plant is known for its beautiful flowers, the root and the rhizomes are used to make medicinal supplements. This medicine has traditionally been used primarily to treat urinary tract and bladder infections, kidney stones and prostate issues. Recent evidence however suggests that hydrangea root may also help treat a range of autoimmune disorders including rheumatism, lupus, eczema and psoriasis.

IS HYDRANGEA ROOT SAFE TO USE?

There is very little evidence regarding the safety of hydrangea root in the long term. It is likely safe when taken orally for just a few days but long term use has not been studied. Make sure that you read any instructions carefully and follow them. Potential side effects include nausea and vomiting, diarrhea and dizziness.

HOW DO YOU MAKE HYDRANGEA ROOT TEA?

Hydrangea root tea is one popular way to use the plant. Simply add a few teaspoons of the dried root to a cup and cover with boiling water. Allow it to seep for 15 minutes then add a little honey to taste. Ready made hydrangea root tea bags are also available online and in some health stores.

SIDE EFFECTS AND PRECAUTIONS

- Hydrangea root is likely to be safe for internal use when it is only taken for a few days however there is little data regarding its long term use.
- Potential side effects include nausea, vomiting, dizziness, chest tightness and diarrhea.
- You should not exceed 2 grams of hydrangea root at the same time and it may be unsafe for long term use.
- Pregnant women and those who are breastfeeding should avoid using hydrangea root.
- Hydrangea interacts with lithium. Because hydrangea may act as a diuretic, it can interfere with the way your body excretes lithium. This may increase the amount of lithium left in the body and could lead to very severe side effects.

- Make sure that you speak with your doctor before using hydrangea root.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Hydrangea is a plant known for its ornamental beauty.
- The roots and the rhizomes are used to make a natural medicine.
- It has traditionally been used to treat kidney stones and infections of the urinary tract and bladder.
- Recent research suggests that it could help treat a wide variety of autoimmune disorders including rheumatism, lupus, psoriasis and eczema.
- It can be taken in various supplement forms including tinctures, teas and capsules.

(1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19498172>