



Gotu Kola (Centella Asiatica)

Gotu Kola Benefits

Spiritual herb

Gotu kola is regarded as perhaps the most spiritual of all herbs in India. Growing in some areas of the Himalayas, gotu kola is used by yogis to **improve meditation**. It is said to develop the crown chakra, the energy center at the top of the head and to balance the right and left hemispheres of the brain, which the leaf is said to resemble.



Rejuvenative herb

It is regarded as one of the most important rejuvenative herbs in Ayurvedic Medicine. Sri Lankans noticed that elephants, renowned for their longevity, munched on the leaves of the plant. Thus the leaves became known as a promoter of long life. It is said to fortify the immune system, both cleansing and feeding it and to strengthen the adrenals. It has been used as a pure blood tonic and for skin health. It has also been used to promote restful sleep. Gotu kola is often confused with kola nut. Due to this confusion, some people assume the rejuvenating properties of gotu kola are due to the stimulating effects of caffeine contained in kola nut. In fact, gotu kola is not related to kola nut and contains no caffeine.

Boosts central nervous system

Gotu Kola is a rejuvenative nervine recommended for nervous disorders, including epilepsy, senility and premature aging. As a brain tonic, it is said to aid intelligence and memory. It strengthens the adrenal glands while cleansing the blood to treat skin impurities. It is said to combat stress and depression, energize flagging mental powers, increase libido, ward off a nervous breakdown and improve reflexes. It energizes the central nervous system and rebuilds energy reserves.

Combats high blood pressure

Gotu Kola can relieve high blood pressure and helps the body defend against various toxins. It is used to treat rheumatism, blood diseases, congestive heart failure, urinary tract infections, venereal diseases, hepatitis and high blood pressure. It is a mild diuretic that can help shrink swollen membranes and aid in the elimination of excess fluids. It hastens the healing of wounds.

Improves circulatory system

Gotu kola has a positive effect on the circulatory system. It improves the flow of blood while strengthening the veins and capillaries. It has been used successfully to treat phlebitis, leg cramps, and abnormal tingling of the extremities. It soothes and minimizes varicose veins and helps to minimize scarring.



Repairs skin

Gotu kola reduces scarring when applied during inflammatory period of the wound. It was found effective when applied on patients with third degree burns, when the treatment commenced immediately after the accident. Daily local application to the affected area along with intramuscular injections, limited the shrinking of the skin as it healed. It is known to prevent infection and inhibit scar formation. It is also useful in repairing skin and connective tissues and smoothing out cellulite.

The primary active constituent is triterpenoid compounds. Saponins (also called triterpenoids) known as asiaticoside, madecassoside, and madasiatic acid are the primary active constituents. These saponins beneficially affect collagen (the material that makes up connective tissue), for example, inhibiting its production in hyperactive scar tissue.

Protects veins and blood vessels

Due mostly to the actions of asiaticoside and madecassoside that it contains, gotu kola may prevent, delay and treat a condition known as **chronic venous insufficiency**. This occurs when valves in the veins that carry blood back to the heart are weak or damaged and blood collects in the veins of the legs. This collection of blood can lead to varicose veins, spider veins, or sores on the legs. More serious results can include blood clots in the legs. Asiaticoside and madecassoside may help keep veins and other blood vessels from leaking. Because it strengthens the walls of blood vessels, gotu kola may also be effective for slowing retinopathy, the gradual break down of the retina in the eyes. It may also help to relieve hemorrhoids. These same effects are thought to strengthen the lining of the gastrointestinal tract, making gotu kola potentially useful for treating ulcers.

Anti-bacterial properties

Gotu kola has long been used in topical, oral, and injected forms to treat leprosy. In addition to its ability to heal the sores associated with leprosy, gotu kola may also have anti-bacterial properties. Evidence from studies shows that asiaticoside may damage the cell walls of the bacteria that cause leprosy. The weakened bacteria are easier for the body's immune system to eliminate.

Modern Studies

According to modern studies, gotu kola does offer support for healthy memory function. A study conducted in 1992 by K. Nalini at Kasturba Medical College showed an impressive improvement in memory in rats which were treated with the extract (orally) daily for 14 days before the experiment. The retention of learned behavior in the rats treated with gotu kola was 3 to 60 times better than that in control animals.

