

MOTHERWORT

(*Leonurus cardiaca*)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Cardiovascular Tonic
- Relaxing Nervine
- Circulatory Stimulant
- Antispasmodic
- Hypotensive
- Antioxidant
- Anti-inflammatory
- Emmenagogue
- Uterine Tonic
- Diaphoretic
- Diuretic
- Hypoglycaemic
- Digestive Bitter
- Antibacterial
- Antifungal
- Vermifuge

Indications

- Cardiac insufficiency, tachycardia or other arrhythmias, hypertension, heart palpitations associated with anxiety and excessive worry, especially when they are a feature of insomnia, poor circulation
- Hyperthyroidism (Graves' disease)
- Menstrual cramping, dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea, menopausal symptoms (especially accompanied by anxiety, insomnia and palpitations), delayed labour, delayed afterbirth. It is often used in the last weeks of pregnancy to facilitate labour and following childbirth to minimise blood loss
- Stress, anxiety
- Digestive disorders, flatulence
- Fever
- Topically used for wounds, skin inflammation, itching and shingles

Traditional Use

Folkloric uses of motherwort emphasised it as being a calming and relaxing herbal agent with tonic effects on hormonal, nervous and cardiac systems. It is also a traditional childbirth and postpartum botanical that has been used for centuries.

Energetics

Cooling, drying, bitter, astringent.

Constituents

Alkaloids, glycosides, flavonoids, iridoids, tannins, terpenoids and triterpenes, citric acid, malic acid, oleic acid, bitter principles, carbohydrates, choline and a phenolic glycoside.

Use in Pregnancy

Motherwort has a traditional use as an emmenagogue and should be avoided by pregnant women in the first trimester (especially in those with a history of miscarriage), second trimester and most of the third trimester. Under the guidance of an experienced practitioner it can be used just before and after labour.

Contraindications and Cautions

Consult a doctor before taking motherwort if taking cardiac medications. Motherwort is contraindicated for women with endometriosis or fibroids because it increases vascularisation to the uterus. Caution should also be taken during heavy menstrual bleeding.

Drug Interactions

Caution with central nervous system depressants including benzodiazepines.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 25% alcohol
15 to 80mL weekly