

Welcome to the
Herb Growers
Network of WA



Herb of the
Month:
Gingko Biloba

Network News

Hi All,
I hope the 10/10/2010 is treating you well. There seems to be many global changes happening. Exciting times to be alive!
After website problems, there have been out with the old and in with the new. The Herb Shop will be recommencing on ebay and I have a new website which will be up and running next week, called www.louiseplant.com.au. This will have links to the shop, though it will take time to replen-

ish all the data for the stock at hand. Meanwhile if you are seeking any herbs or herbal products then please let me know. I will be happy to accommodate you.
This month I am writing about acne, after being stimulated to find out more from living with teenagers. Yes there is a diet connection, good luck making them believe and see that!

Enjoy your month,
Louise Plant



Interesting Facts to Consider

- An EU directive in Europe is looking to place a total ban on alternative healing methods and supplements. There are petitions that can be signed and for things to change they need 35 million votes. If you have family and friends in Europe then please pass this on.
- The directive is looking to come into full force in April 2011 and this means that all herbal and mineral supplements are to be banned. All teaching of alternative healing methods will also be banned. This will also include homeopathic collages. As from this summer it will be forbidden to sell books about using plants and minerals for healing purposes.
- The links for the petitions are as <http://www.grammasintl.com/html/products/campaigns.asp> or <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/joininghandsinhealth/>
- Researchers have found strong evidence for passion flower and kava kava in the treatment of anxiety symptoms. The findings have been published in the Nutritional Journal. They found Lysine and arginine also to be effective, though not magnesium and St John's wort.
- The consumer group Choice is calling for a ban on Bisphenol chemicals and to follow Canada. Studies have shown that BPA can interfere with the body's natural hormones. Concern is in baby's bottles. Choice is asking for safer exposure limits in Australia.

QUALITY HERBS Given with WISDOM

Do you know where you are able to find quality herbs?

Do you know where you can find information and traditional uses of herbs?

- The Herb Growers Network of WA, offers Quality Herbs with Wisdom.

Article

Is Acne Linked to Diet?



Puri T

We know that diet can directly affect our insulin levels, though can it affect acne?

What is acne?

Most of the time acne is caused by the sebaceous glands at the base of the hair follicles of the skin secreting too much sebum.

Sebum is an oily substance released from the pores to keep the skin lubricated and healthy. When too much sebum is produced or it gets clogged it can form hard plugs that block the pores and produce pimples.

Scientists have shown that hormonal fluctuations in androgens can result in acne flare ups. Insulin also will affect our growth hormones and other hormones, hence it is speculated that insulin spikes can develop acne.

Two studies in 1969 and in 1971 were undertaken to determine whether chocolate and acne are related. The first study only compared cocoa content, and all the participants had similar states of acne. This posed the question as to whether the sugar and milk it contained was a factor. To this day it has remained unproven that there is a direct relationship between acne and chocolate.

A more recent study in 2002 looked at indigenous tribes from Papua New Guinea. These people had zero incidence of acne.

This was then followed by a study looking at high-glycemic foods such as grains, milk, processed foods, bread, French fries and potato chips as being the main culprits.

Eating these foods lead to a high production of insulin, which in turn can raise male hormones. This then leads to an excess production of sebum in the body, which can clog the pores and cause acne.

Another type of food to consider is saturated fats and trans-fats such as margarine and hydrogenated oils. These types of fats are found in meat, dairy, poultry and in fast foods. The previously mentioned foods will also be high in saturated fats and trans-fats.

In this modern day of factory farming many of these foods are loaded with hormones as well. This exacerbate and increase hormone spikes.

Stress is another factor that is important in this second most prevalent skin condition. Stress will make the adrenal glands step into overdrive and once again hormone levels will spike. Stress can come from emotional triggers, physical irritations on the skin from soaps, cosmetics, washing powders etc. Medications, in particular steroids, contraceptives and any drugs that affect hormone levels could be an influence on acne.

Eating excessive salty food, also have been shown to increase acne. Chips are the biggest culprit here as they have high iodine levels, high in fats and starches.

Some people do believe that eating too much can increase hormone levels and this is proven in obesity. Though there is no direct link between obesity and acne at this stage.

A final factor that might need to be considered is that when eating processed foods you are eating foods that are devoid of nutrients. Processed foods can have as much as 50 to 90% of the nutrients that were in the whole food removed when they are processed. This is the difference between white flour and wholemeal flour.

Vitamin A and Zinc are great nutrients for the skin, though they will be found in minimal amounts in processed foods. A healthy and well balanced diet will show up on your skin.



Cold and Flu Tea

What Can Be Done?

Eat a low glyceamic diet. This is a diet that is rich in veggies, fruit, seafood and grass fed meats, as these will help to stabilize insulin levels.

Use Omega 3 fats, like fish oils. These have been shown to have powerful anti-inflammatory activity on our bodies.

Avoid hot and damp foods such as sugary cakes, cookies, sweets, alcohol, chocolate, fried and greasy foods, diary foods, peanuts and fats and oils.

Reduce your carbohydrate intake. If you must eat carbs then eat complex and wholegrain carbs, brown rice, brown pasta etc. These types of carbs will not cause a spike in your blood sugars. Aim for cereals that contain bran, barley and oats rather than wheat.

Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables as these help to stabilize the blood glucose and the insulin levels too.

A higher protein diet may help. This will decrease the production of the enzymes that cause more sebum production. Eggs and fish would be great protein sources to have. A poached egg would be far better than a fried egg.

Reduce or cut out salty foods.

Cut down on walnuts, almonds and brazil nuts unless they are soaked first.

Reduce the amount of dairy and diary products that you eat as these will increase mucus production. Reduce your consumption of fizzy drinks, these are high in sugar and have no nutritional value what so ever.

Drink lots of water. This acts to flush out the toxins and junk in your body. Hot water, herb teas and fresh veg or fruit juices are also recommended.

Herbs To Help

There are some herbs which have been well documented as to their phenomenal benefits in helping with acne.

Neem is one of these herbs.

Neem will counteract the excess sugar content in the blood, as well as having the added benefit in reducing the multiplication of viruses and the skin, This gives an added bonus of blocking viruses and gives it a germicidal and anti allergy activity. It is also anti fungal and has been used for centuries for a wide range of skin disorders. The leaves can be crushed and applied as a paste and improvements will be seen in a matter of minutes.

Sandalwod would be something that could be used topically.

Other herbs that could be used topically include Calendula, Lavender, Aloe gel, Tea tree oil, witch hazel and Rose water. Generally speaking, just treating the skin topically will not address the internal causes of acne and skin eruptions. Aloe is astringing and has healing and anti-bacterial properties. Calendula will help with healing, Lavender compresses will relive inflammation, as will rose water, though it will also help if there is an pain. Tea tree oil is an anti-septic which will need to be diluted and witch hazel is an anti-bacterial and an astringent.

To help internally herbs can be considered like Echinacea to promote healing and remove inflammation, burdock to tone a sluggish liver and eliminate toxins. Combined with dandelion root it contains inulin which improves the skin my removing bacteria.

ST Mary's Thistle could be added with dandelion to also cleanse the blood and the liver.

Red clover could be used to clean up the blood, goldenseal will act as a skin tonic and it is a powerful antibacterial. It is good for treating the underlying condition of intestinal toxicity.

Other herbs which might also be useful internally are turmeric, Holy basil and the Chinese herbs Cnidium and Japanese Honeysuckle. Holy Basil is a great blood purifier and it also kills bacteria.



*Tincture Making
at a Field Trip*

"I have had mild acne since my teens and when I turned 25 it suddenly seemed to get worse. A few months ago, I cut all dairy from my diet and switched to a lower GI diet (lots of vegetables, wholegrains and fruit). I also drink lots of water. My skin has completely cleared up – it took about a month for my skin to completely settle down but now I don't get any breakouts and I feel much healthier"



Herb of the Month—Ginkgo Biloba

Name: Ginkgo

Botanic Name – Ginkgo Biloba

Family - Ginkgoaceae

Other Names - Maidenhair tree, Ginkgo Biloba

Parts Used: Leaves, TCM uses fruits

History: Ginkgo is the oldest living tree species in the world, having survived unchanged in China for over three hundred million years. Charles Darwin called the ginkgo tree a living fossil. Ginkgo trees, also known as maidenhair trees, are very resistant to viruses, fungi, insects, pollution, and even radiation. In fact, a ginkgo tree was the only plant to survive the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The great longevity of the ginkgo has made it a popular ornamental tree in parks and along the streets of U.S. cities. Individual trees can live for more than a thousand years. Medicinal use of ginkgo can be traced back almost 5,000 years in Chinese herbal medicine. It was recommended for respiratory tract ailments as well as memory loss in the elderly. Today, Ginkgo biloba extract is recognized as an invaluable aid in the treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease.

Habitat: It is native to rich sandy soils in Central China

Description - Ginkgo Biloba is the world's oldest living species of tree; individual trees live as long as 1,000 years. The trees grow most prominently in the southern and eastern United States and in China

Cultivation— The plant likes hot sun sheltered from weather. They grow a male and female tree and the female tree will produce a fleshy fruit if the male is nearby.

Active Compounds - The medical benefits of ginkgo biloba extract (GBE) rely on the proper balance of two groups of active components: the ginkgo flavone glycosides and the terpene lactones. These bioflavonoids are primarily responsible for GBE's antioxidant activity and ability to inhibit platelet aggregation (stickiness). The unique terpene lactone components found in GBE, known as ginkgolides and bilobalide, increase circulation to the brain and other parts of the body as well as exert a protective effect on nerve cells.

Actions

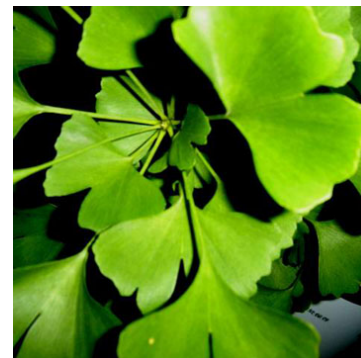
- Antioxidant
- Peripheral vasodilator
- Circulatory stimulant
- Anti-platelet activity
- Neuroprotective
- Cognition enhancing

Indications—

Symptomatic relief of organic brain dysfunction, Intermittent Claudication, Vertigo (vascular origin), Tinnitus (vascular origin)

It is useful for disturbed brain functions, which result in dizziness, tinnitus, and headache with emotional lability and anxiety. Ginkgo has also been demonstrated to improve concentration and memory deficits as a result of peripheral arterial occlusive disease.

Other Applications: Alzheimer's disease, Atherosclerosis, Cerebrovascular insufficiency, Congestive heart failure, Depression, Diabetes, Impotence/infertility (male), Intermittent claudication, Macular degeneration, Migraine headaches, Multiple sclerosis, Raynaud's phenomenon.



GBE - Ginkgo Biloba Extract

GBE and Circulation - GBE increases circulation to both the brain and extremities of the body. In addition to inhibiting platelet stickiness, GBE regulates the tone and elasticity of blood vessels. In other words, it makes circulation more efficient. This improvement in circulation efficiency extends to both large vessels (arteries) and smaller vessels (capillaries) in the circulatory system.

Antioxidant Properties - GBE may have antioxidant properties in the brain, retina of the eye, and the cardiovascular system. Its antioxidant activity in the brain and central nervous system may help prevent age-related declines in brain function. GBE's antioxidant activity in the brain is of particular interest. The brain and central nervous system are particularly susceptible to free radical attack. Free radical damage in the brain is widely accepted as being a contributing factor in many disorders associated with aging, including Alzheimer's disease.

Nerve Protection and PAF Inhibition - One of the primary protective effects of the ginkgolides are their ability to inhibit a substance known as platelet-activating factor (PAF). PAF is a mediator released from cells that causes platelets to aggregate (clump together). High amounts of PAF are associated with damage to nerve cells, poor blood flow to the central nervous system, inflammatory conditions, and bronchial constrictions. Much like free radicals, higher PAF levels are also associated with aging. Ginkgolides and bilobalide protect nerve cells in the central nervous system from damage during periods of ischemia (lack of oxygen to tissues in the body). This effect may be supportive for persons who have suffered a stroke. Recent animal studies indicate that bilobalide may help regenerate damaged nerve cells.

Anti-Aging Properties - Ginkgo increases blood flow to the brain and has excellent restorative effects on the nervous system. Hundreds of scientific studies, involving tens of thousands of patients, attest to the effectiveness of Ginkgo biloba extract for the many problems associated with cerebral vascular insufficiency and impaired mental performance in elderly patients. The active components of Ginkgo biloba have a profound tonic effect on the mind and body. GBE has been shown to inhibit the reuptake of norepinephrine, serotonin, dopamine, and acetylcholine, important neurotransmitters in the brain. The extract acts as an antioxidant and a nerve cell membrane stabilizer. It also enhances oxygen and glucose utilization and increases blood flow in arteries, veins, and capillaries. Experiments involving learned helplessness and behavioural despair in laboratory animals demonstrated that GBE exhibited some anti-anxiety and antidepressant activities.

Clinical Trials and Proof of Efficacy - In October, 1997 JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) published research showing that Ginkgo biloba extract appears to slow Alzheimer's disease. The randomly assigned, double-blind, placebo-controlled study was performed for one year by neurologist Dr. Pierre L. LeBars and a team of scientists at the New York Institute for Medical Research. The study found that 27 percent of patients who took 120 mg of ginkgo extract for six months or longer improved their mental functioning, including memory, reasoning, and the ability to learn, compared to only 14 percent of those taking placebo. The study began with 309 patients aged 45 or older with most suffering from Alzheimer's disease but also some with dementia caused by strokes. The study showed that ginkgo can stabilize or even improve mental performance in one-third of those who are mildly impaired by Alzheimer's.

Dosage - Many people take 120-160 mg of GBE, standardized to contain 6% terpene lactones and 24% flavone glycosides, two to three times per day. Amounts up to 240 mg per day are used by some people with cerebrovascular insufficiency, confusion and memory loss, and resistant depression. GBE may need to be taken for six to eight weeks before desired effects are noticed. Ginkgo may also be taken as a tincture of 0.5 ml three times daily. 0.5 – 2ml tds (1:1)

Safety - Ginkgo extract is considered relatively safe and remarkably free of side effects when taken as directed. Some people taking extremely large doses may have diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and restlessness. If this should occur, reduce the dosage. Ginkgo biloba extract acts as a blood thinner by inhibiting platelets from clumping together, so it could be unsafe for patients who are taking aspirin or other blood thinners. In Europe, ginkgo extract is prescribed in lower doses (40 mg daily) for patients who are taking aspirin or anticoagulants for circulatory problems.

There are no known contraindications to the use of GBE by pregnant and lactating women.

It is important to remember that circulatory conditions in the elderly can involve serious disease. Individuals should seek proper medical care and accurate medical diagnosis prior to self-prescribing GBE.

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