

Crataegus sp. (over 800 species)
Family: *Rosaceae* - rose, apple, peach, strawberry
Subfamily: Almond
Parts used: fruits, leaves and flowers (most medicinal)

Also known as mayflower for in England it flowers in May, this is the same plant the pilgrim's ship was named for. Well known as one of the best heart supporting plants out there. It is best used as a long-term tonic to be taken every day as a nourishing "food" for the heart. Diet and nutrition play a critical role in heart health as well.

Properties

Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antispasmodic, astringent, cardiotonic, carminative, diuretic, emmenagogue, hypotensive, hypolipidemic, nervine, tonic, vasodilator.

Energetics: cooling, moistening
Systems Affected: cardiovascular, adrenal, emotional heart

Uses

- Cardio tonic; feeds, tones, strengthens, supports and restorative to heart - go to for any heart/circulatory related issue
- Can regulate blood pressure, rapid pulse, palpitations, angina, anemia, etc.
- Softens and opens veins and arteries for free flow of blood, improved circulation.
- Helps maintain healthy cholesterol levels.
- Can dissolve calcium and cholesterol deposits which can help with hardening arteries and plaquing.
- Protects heart during oxygen loss, heart attack/stroke recovery and even prevention.
- Circulatory conditions including blood clotting (best when blended with yarrow)
- Strengthens capillaries which helps with bruising, varicose veins, blood shot eyes, etc.
- Strengthen and repair ligaments, tendons, muscles, joint lining, collagen, and spinal discs, bruising, arthritis, fractures, osteoporosis, orthopedic aid (use equal parts horsetail).
- Can quiet ADHD, fidgety, can't sit still, disruptive, restless, etc.
- Urinary tract support and aid, kidney issues like stones
- Sore throat (berries)
- Traditional uses; diarrhea, heavy menstrual bleeding, drawing action.

Emotional Heart

- Emotional wounds; grief, sadness, empty heart, tough relationships, etc.
- Opens heart center; enhances emotional wellbeing, fostering love, empathy and connection.
- Help during times of change; new ways of feeling and thinking.
- Nerves; anxiety, stress, insomnia, bad dreams, restlessness, overactive mind and body, vertigo, can lift the spirits, etc.
- Trauma, shock, PTSD, death of loved one, heartbreak, etc.
- Helps balance mood; mood swings, menopause
- Fosters courage and love for self and others.
- Softens and opens hard substances both physical and emotional.

Herb Preparations

- Tincture; a whole tincture can be made by gathering flowers and leaves in the spring, then tincture berries in the fall and add both tinctures together for a powerful heart tonic.
- Tea (1 oz berries to 1 pint water, simmer for 15 minutes, 2 tsp per cup)
- Powder, capsules, sprinkle
- Herbal honey
- Food; raw berries, jam, syrup, or jelly

Care/Harvesting

Hawthorn has around 900 species and ranges from a hedge to a shrub or tree. It grows in woodland areas, abandoned fields, pastures and scrub and can be found in parks and the garden. It can be easily cultivated in your garden by purchasing a tree or shrub from your local nursery.

- Plant in full sun with moist soil, although it isn't too picky about growing conditions.
- Gather blossoms and leaves in the spring when partially to fully open.
- Berries are harvested in the fall when deep red, avoiding any with rot. Be mindful of the stony seeds when processing.

Safety

Hawthorn can take up to three months for any effects to be noticed and it may need to be taken indefinitely as a tonic since it does not stay in the system. It works like a food that needs constant consumption.

Consult a physician before use, if taking heart medications/pharmaceuticals.