

Artichoke - *Cynara scolymus*

Common name: Artichoke

Latin name: *Cynara scolymus*

Family: Asteraceae or aster family

Parts used: Leaves

Taste/smell: Bitter

Tendencies: Artichoke has cooling and drying activities.

Constituents: The bitter principle cynarin is concentrated the most in the leaves. Other constituents include flavonoids, sesquiterpene lactones, inulin, polyphenols and caffeic acids.

Dosage:

Tea Infusion: 2 heaping tablespoons of the dry leaves per cup of water 1-3 times per day

Tincture: 1:1 fresh plant liquid extract, 10 - 90 drops 1 - 3 times per day in a little water. Dry plant tincture can also be used.

Capsules: 2-4 capsules 1-3 times per day

Use: (a) Hepatic, (b) Cholagogue, ⁴⁴⁵ (c) Choloretic, ⁴⁴⁵ (d) Hepatoprotective, (e) Antihepatotoxic, (f) Antioxidant, ^{442, 443} (g) Hypocholesterolemic, ⁴⁴⁴ (h) Antispasmodic, (i) Antiatherosclerotic, ^{438, 440} (j) Antithrombotic, ⁴⁴⁰ (k) Diuretic, (l) Hypolipidemic ⁴⁴⁶

Artichoke is commonly used to protect the liver as well as stimulate sluggish livers. It is useful in digestive disorders with abdominal pain, nausea, bloating and gas. The extract has demonstrated liver-protecting and regenerating effects in rat studies. It is useful in support of general liver function, nonalcoholic steatohepatitis, prevention of gall stones, digestive disorders such as functional dyspepsia (indigestion without an ulcer), ⁴⁴¹ irritable bowel, ⁴³⁹ Crohn's and dysbiosis.

It's ability to stimulate bile concentration (choloretic) and bile flow (cholagogue) is quite profound, and quick acting, making it useful in digestion of fats in food, and the fat soluble vitamins, A, D, E and k. The enhancement of bile flow helps with absorption of iron, calcium and magnesium. Bile has an antibacterial effect, and stimulates colon motility, thereby helping with constipation. Bile also stimulates mucin secretion, and is involved in conjugation of foreign compounds. Therefore, the fact that Artichoke is a significant choloretic and cholagogue, tells us, it is a wonderful digestive aid. However, its action on bile is not the only thing that makes it supportive to the digestive tract. It also supports beneficial intestinal flora. This is partly through increased bile fecal acids when using the plant leaf, but also due to the 10-30% content of inulin in the "heart" of the dry immature flower that acts as a prebiotic.

Research with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) has shown a 26.45% decrease in IBS incidence in one human study, and a second surveillance study showed significant improvement in the severity of symptoms and

96% of the patients rated Artichoke as better than or at least equal to previous therapies used.

Artichoke leaf may be useful in metabolic syndrome. Studies with diet-induced obese mice suggest that long-term supplementation with Artichoke leaf can prevent obesity, and related metabolic disorders, such as dyslipidemia, hepatic steatosis, insulin resistance and inflammation.⁶⁴⁶ There have also been positive studies examining the use of Artichoke leaf in patients with specific polymorphisms related to metabolic syndrome.

Mechanism of Action: Artichoke flavonoids appear useful in supporting cardiovascular health by support of endothelial integrity via increasing endothelial nitric oxide production.⁴⁴⁰

Contraindications: The fresh leaf may cause contact dermatitis in susceptible individuals.



Alfalfa



Aloe



Arnica



Artichoke



Bee Balm



Wood Betony



Black cohosh



Bladderwrack



Astragalus

YouAreTheHealer.org - Sharol Tilgner ND

Astragalus - Astragalus membranaceus

Common name: Astragalus

Latin name: *Astragalus membranaceus*

Family: Fabaceae or legume family

Parts used: Root. The dried sliced root, which looks like a tongue depressor, is the usual form of the crude herb supplied from Chinese sources. Better quality root will have more yellow coloration in the central part of the root from increased flavonoids.

Taste/smell: Sweet

Tendencies: Slightly warming, moistening in that it circulates moisture.

Constituents: The most pharmacologically-active constituent groups are polysaccharides, triterpene saponins, and the flavonoids. Astragalus contains the constituent formononetin.

Dosage

Tea Decoction: 1 heaping tablespoon or 1/2 stick of the dry root per cup of water 2-3 times per day

Food: Add this root to your soup or stew which is one way it is used traditionally. It has a mild, sweet flavor which works well in these dishes. Simply remove the root before eating the food as it is fibrous. If you get it in cut up chunks (called cut and sift), you can still add it to a pot of stew, but put it in a tea bag or mesh tea ball or other method of containing it, so it is easy to remove.

Tincture: 1:4 dry plant liquid extract, 10-60 drops 2-3 times per day in a little water

Capsules: 2-4 capsules 2-3 times per day

Mental picture and specific indications: This herb benefits weakened and deficient individuals with night sweats, prolapsing organs, frequent infectious illnesses, poor digestion and nutritional status and a general lack of vitality.

Use: (a) Adaptogenic, (b) Immunomodulating,^{310, 391} (c) Anti-tumor activity,³⁹¹ (d) Promotes tissue regeneration, (e) Anti-inflammatory, (f) Antiviral,³⁹¹ (g) Protects kidney function, (h) Cardiotonic, (i) Diuretic, (j) Hypotensive, (k) Protects against WBC drops during chemotherapy, (l) Antioxidant,^{43, 336} (m) Antidiabetic, (n) Neuroprotective, (o) Pulmonary protective, (p) Hepatoprotective³⁹¹

It is helpful in situations where the person is significantly deficient which is observed in symptoms of fatigue, weakness, lack of appetite, diarrhea, ulcerations, numbness or limbs, edema, prolapsed organs (hemorrhoids, uterine) and spontaneous sweating or night sweats. This herb can be supportive of multiple organ systems and bring back vitality and health in these instances.

This herb is considered a tonic to the immune system, digestive tract and the lungs. Its ability to build up strong lungs and immune system makes it a good herb to take preventively for colds, influenza, hay fever and asthma. Astragalus has been shown in research to be immunologically active but appears to have amphoteric activity.

One of the more important features of Astragalus is its ability to prevent and protect the body's cells against cell damage and death from various toxins.

Astragalus has hypotensive activity which appears to be due to both vasodilator and cardiodepressor activity.

In cancer patients receiving conventional chemotherapy treatment, astragalus protects adrenal cortical function and decreases bone marrow suppression.

It's long held thought that it is tonic to the lungs shows up in it's equally long use in treating people with asthma. Astragalus has been shown to specifically improve airway inflammation in studies. Animal studies show a reduction in airway excessive response, decreases mucus production and decreased collagen deposition, along with lowered inflammatory cytokines. It is especially useful in people with hay fever who have had asthmatic attacks previously. Using it prior to hay fever season can be helpful to reduce the allergic reactions and prevent an acute asthmatic attack. A human clinical study in patients with hay fever showed a decrease in symptoms when Astragalus was compared to placebo.

This is a slow acting herb. Do not expect immediate results. It is not for acute situations. It is better to use it to build up the body so the body can avoid acute situations. For example, it is best to use it to prevent colds and flu, rather than taking it after you already have a cold or the flu.

Mechanism of Action:

Protection From Cancer: There are volumes of research on Astragalus and its ability to inhibit cancer cells in vitro. Astragalus saponins have shown tumor growth inhibition, decrease of cell invasiveness and angiogenesis and induction of apoptosis. In vivo research is harder to come by, but there are a few studies.

Immune System: Astragalus has an amphoteric effect on the immune system. It supports the immune system in infectious disease, while reducing a sensitive immune system, or hypervigilant immune system in auto-immune disease. On the one hand immune system upregulation has been shown in laboratory studies where Astragalus extracts increase the activity of white blood cells, such as monocytes, natural killer cells, and lymphocytes, even when their activity is suppressed by substances such as steroids. On the other hand, control of the immune system is seen in Astragalus animal studies show protection of pancreatic beta cells in models of auto-immune pancreatitis. The Astragalus constituent, astragaloside also shows protection in mice from fibrotic changes in the skin disease called scleroderma. The polysaccharides have been shown to decrease inflammation of rheumatoid arthritis in rats. This ability to

upregulate and downregulate the same bodily activity such as seen here in the immune system is called amphoteric activity.

Digestion: Astragalus is protective and beneficial to the digestion. In rats, Astragalus polysaccharide has been shown to improve injury to the intestinal wall mucosa and modulate the balance of T lymphocyte subsets in Peyer's patch (intestinal lymph tissue) in a time and dose-dependent manner. It can also promote the protective secretory-IgA secretion of the intestinal mucosa.⁷¹⁹

Astragalus is used to treat skin disorders such as chronic ulcerations and sores that can appear with lowered immunity. The Astragalus saponin astragaloside IV, used topically, has been found to have significant anti-inflammatory and immunomodulating activities, and therefore has been studied in relation to wound healing. One study in diabetic mice with wounds, showed significant acceleration of wound healing with the topical use of this saponin.⁶⁴⁸ Additionally, astragaloside has been shown to decrease UVB/sun-induced aging of rat skin cells through enhanced autophagy. Mice studies using Astragalus polysaccharides to treat scleroderma showed promise in decreasing the fibrotic process. It appeared to possibly be due to lowered TGF-B1 production.

Contraindications: At low-to-moderate doses, astragalus has few side effects. Astragalus may interact with medications that suppress the immune system, such as the drug cyclophosphamide taken by cancer patients and similar drugs taken by organ transplant recipients. As a general rule transplant recipients should not use immunomodulators such as Astragalus. Some species of Astragalus that grow in the United States contain the neurotoxin swainsonine and have caused "locoweed" poisoning in animals. Some others may contain nitrotoxins, or excessive selenium. So, be species specific and use only Astragalus membranaceus.