



CAT WHISKERS HERB, THE HERB THAT IS PURR..FECT FOR YOUR HEALTH!

INTRODUCTION

Medicinal benefits

Consumed widely in Indonesia and South East Asia, cat whiskers herb also popularly known as *Java tea* is commonly brewed as a tea for its revered medicinal properties. The herb has its origins from the oceanic region and was made popular to the West in early 20th century. Cat whiskers herb is native in the tropical region of Australia and can be found in South East Asia and also certain parts of India. The plant belongs to the mint family and it owes its name to its flower which has long protruding stamens resembling cat's whiskers. Its beautiful white and purple flowers and the ease to grow makes it a favorite amongst avid gardeners. Its scientific name is *Orthosiphon stamineus*. It is also commonly referred as *Orthosiphon aristatus*

Beauty is not just skin deep for Cat Whiskers herb, it is packed with powerful anti-oxidants giving it many medicinal properties (Akow-

uah et al., 2004). Some of the phytochemicals isolated from the herb include terpenes, flavonoids, caffeic acid derivatives and essential oils (Tezuka et al., 2000). It is used in both Traditional Chinese medicine and Indian Ayurvedic medicine and widely used to treat high blood pressure, diabetes (Sriplang et al., 2007) and inflammatory joint conditions (Yam et al., 2009) such as gout and rheumatoid arthritis. The herb is also renowned for its effectiveness in treating urogenital tract infection and renal gravel which is a recognised medicinal property of this herb by Committee of Herbal Medical Product of the European Medical Agency (EMA). Its powerful diuretic property (Van deer Veen et al., 1979) helps to flush the urinary tract from residing bacteria by halting bacterial colonisation and adherence to the urinary tract surfaces. This flushing property also helps to rid of renal gravel. Therefore, it is not a surprise why the

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herb is also known as “Indian kidney tea”. *Orthosiphon* leaves are rich in caffeic acid derivatives. This is a group of anti-oxidant rich compounds that can be found in mint, sage, thyme, cinnamon, star anise and even red wine! One compound that can be found in high level in this medicinal herb is rosmarinic acid (Akowuah et al., 2004). The same compound found in rosemary! Rosmarinic acid has been shown to help to reduce glucose absorption by reducing carbohydrate metabolism and absorption. It works by inhibiting pancreatic α -amylase and intestinal α -glucosidase, two enzymes that are important in the absorption of starch and uptake of glucose (Mohamed EA, et al., 2012). Cat Whiskers herb can also increase the level of leptin, a powerful metabolic hormone that help to reduce your appetite.

Bone and Joint Health

Inflammatory joint condition is a common occurrence that can significantly influence mobility. This is often due to symptoms of gout and rheumatoid arthritis. Cat Whiskers herb has a powerful anti-inflammatory property. It has been shown to be effective in reducing uric acid level in the blood. High uric acid can lead to the formation of uric acid crystals in the joint area (Yam et al., 2007). This makes the herb useful in treating gout. The herb has also been shown to increase bone strength in post-menopausal animal model (Yam et al., 2007). It is naturally rich in

potassium and calcium that is important for strong healthy bones.

Liver Detox

The liver is a vital organ that helps to cleanse the blood of metabolic waste. However, its ability in doing so can be compromised when it is overwhelmed with excess food intake or even when exposed to excess alcohol consumption. Cat Whiskers herb is a powerful cleansing herb. It has a strong liver protective effect (Yam et al., 2007) attributed to its powerful anti-oxidant property. Herbal extract of Cat Whiskers herb has been shown to be able to prevent liver damage caused

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by alcohol and certain medication. It has also been shown to reduce signs of fatty liver and also bilirubin concentration in jaundiced subjects. It is a powerful herb for liver detox. It acts like a natural cleanser that helps to eliminate toxin build up in our system.

Cognitive function and neuronal health

The rosmarinic acid present in the Cat Whiskers herb can help to improve memory and also protect against neuronal cell death induced by beta-amyloid in Alzheimer's Disease (Retinasamy T. et al., 2016). It also has a calming effect that can help to reduce symptoms of anxiety.

Anti-bacterial and anti-fungal

Cat Whiskers herb has been shown to have good anti-bacterial properties including *E.coli*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Bacillus subtilis*, *Micrococcus luteus* and *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Alshawsh MA, et al., 2012). It inhibits a mechanism call quorum sensing that prevent biofilm formation which in turn reduces the susceptibility of bladder and kidney infection. Cat whiskers herb is also very effective against fungal infection caused by *Candida albicans* and *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Skin Tone

Cat whiskers herb has been shown to be useful in eliminating oily skin appearance due to over reactive sebum protection (Vogelgesang B, et al., 2011). Couple this with its anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties, it makes a powerful herbal remedy for acne as well as for minor cuts and wounds. Cat Whiskers herb is also useful for a number of inflammatory skin condition such as psoriasis. The high anti-oxidant present in this herb makes it a powerful anti-aging herb.

Cold Remedy

Cat whiskers herb can be a powerful cold remedy (Ismail S, et al. 2010). Its anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties can help in reducing the symptoms of minor throat and mouth infection. The herb can also help to ease cough and reduce symptoms of hyperthermia. Taking Cat Whiskers herb may help to reduce the severity of cough and cold. It can also help to better manage chronic respiratory problem such as asthma.

Anti-Cancer

Research has shown that certain solvent extract of Cat Whiskers can block a number of important biochemical processes that are crucial for cancer growth and metastasis. One of these processes is called angiogenesis which is a process of new blood vessel development that is vital for cancer cells to channel their required nutrients (Mohamed B., et al., 2012; Dhamraa, 2017; Md Shamsuddin, 2017). Cat Whiskers herb has been shown to be able to stop this process making it a useful tool to better manage or prevent this disease.

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