



Arnica montana

The species *Arnica montana*, native to Europe, has long been used medicinally, but this use has not been substantiated.

Medicinal uses

Arnica montana has been used medicinally for centuries. The roots contain derivatives of thymol, which are used as fungicides and preservatives and may have some anti-inflammatory effect. Arnica is currently used in liniment and ointment preparations used for strains, sprains, and bruises. Commercial arnica preparations are frequently used by professional athletes. Arnica should not be taken internally due to its toxicity, with the possible exception of homeopathic preparations that are diluted at 24X or more, since none of the chemicals from the plant remain in them.

The medicinal effects of Arnica montana have been studied somewhat and many of the historical uses validated to some extent by clinical research. Some mechanisms are well-understood, but many researchers call for more research before drawing strong conclusions.

The thymol derivatives concentrated in the plants roots have been clinically shown to be effective vasodilators of subcutaneous blood capillaries. Arnica preparations used topically have been demonstrated to act as an anti-inflammatory and assist normal healing processes by facilitating transport of blood and fluid accumulations through a dilating action of subcutaneous blood capillaries. In one double-blind trial, Arnica montana was found to be equally effective as the more expensive diclofenac for accelerating wound healing after foot surgery, but was less effective than the same drug for pain relief. However, Diclofenac does not promote wound healing as it is an anti-inflammatory drug and hence this comparison is not useful. A study of wound-healing after surgery to treat varicose veins found a trend towards a beneficial effect of reduction of pain and hematoma following surgery.

ARNICA

Arnica Montana

The pure essential arnica oil contains a high percentage of toxic constituents. However, arnica infused oil or homoeopathic tincture or ointment is a most valuable addition to any home first aid box. When applied externally, arnica infused oil stimulates the peripheral blood supply making it one of the best remedies for sprains, strains, bruises, RSI and similar problems. It may also be used in blends to relieve rheumatism and other inflammatory conditions.

CAUTION

Never use arnica infused oil on broken skin.