



Herbs For Healing Newsletter

Herb of the month: **Ginkgo Biloba**

Ginkgo – medicine and bearer of hope

Ginkgo biloba (Maidenhair tree) is one of the most interesting medicinal trees on the planet.

There are over 400 scientific studies into ginkgo biloba which state that the leaves of the tree help to improve memory loss, concentration, dizziness, tinnitus and intermittent claudication.



Ginkgo biloba is widely known as herb for the brain. It improves blood flow to the brain.

A new study suggests that it also may protect damaged nerve cells.



Ginkgo is the herb of choice for preventing and treating dementia.

Research also has found that ginkgo has a positive effect on memory and intellectual abilities in people who suffer with Alzheimer's or vascular dementia.

The German government in 1994 approved ginkgo biloba extract for the treatment of dementia .

Ginkgo Biloba trees can be found growing in the UK

The large yet slow growing ginkgo tree can be planted in any fertile moist garden soil, ideally in a sheltered location in full to part sun. It is rarely troubled by pests or diseases. There are some ginkgo trees growing here in Salisbury (*see photo at top of this page), and probably in many other British towns and villages.

Ginkgo's active ingredients are flavinoids and terpenoids

Two of its many components, flavonoids and terpenoids, are ginkgo's active ingredients. These are both said to improve blood flow to the brain. Like any other organ in the body, the brain needs a constant supply of oxygen and nutrients in order to work well.

The nerves, heart muscle, blood vessels and retina of the eye can also be protected by ginkgo's flavonoids. The terpenoids slightly thin the blood by reducing the stickiness of the blood platelets and they help to dilate the blood vessels. All of these properties help to benefit the brain.

It was also discovered that the chemicals found in the ginkgo leaves may protect body cells from damage by free radicals which are produced by the body's normal metabolism and with exposure to pollution or radiation.

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A 'living fossil', said Charles Darwin

The magnificent ginkgo tree is quite a special tree. It was described by Charles Darwin as a 'living fossil'. It is the oldest tree on the planet and dates back between 250 and 300 million years, a time span we can hardly imagine.

One of the oldest ginkgo trees grows in China and is believed to be about 4000 years old. Resilience is the tree's strength. It is resilient against many diseases and infestations and environmental pollution.

Ginkgo trees survived the Hiroshima blast

67 years ago, at the end of World War II on 6th August the Americans dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima in Japan. Six ginkgo biloba trees grew less than a mile from the blast centre, they survived the blast without major deformities and four are still alive today.

They were the only surviving larger life forms within 1km of the blast.



Symbol of hope

In many countries this tree is revered as bearer of hope. Engraved on one of the tree is "No more Hiroshima" and peoples' prayers for peace.

Its ability to survive is due to its remarkable adaptability, resistance to disease, and to Buddhist monks who cultivated and preserved the trees on sacred grounds.

< Source: www.kwanten.home.xs4all.nl

Precautions

Components in the herb can trigger side effects and interact with other herbs or pharmaceutical medication, especially blood thinning medication and anti-depressants. It will be best to consult a qualified herbalist about these issues.

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