



Traditional medicinal uses of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

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ABSTRACT

Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAP_s) are the ingredients of herbal drugs, herbal preparations, and herbal medicinal products, besides traditional/ complementary medicines, house hold remedies and nutraceuticals. Over 100 million women world wide are currently using hormonal contraceptives. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* with these drugs, fertility can be suppressed at will, for as long as desired, with almost 100% confidence and complete return of fertility on discontinuation. The efficacy, convenience, low cost and overall safety of oral contraceptives (OC_s) has allowed women to decide if and when they will become pregnant and to plan their activities. This article highlights some of the traditional medicinal uses, chemical composition, therapeutic evaluation of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*.

Keywords: Traditional medicinal uses, chemical composition, therapeutic evaluation, therapeutic claims of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

INTRODUCTION

The herb *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* Linn (Malvaceae) is a glabrous shrub widely cultivated in the tropics as an ornamental plant and has several forms with varying colours of flowers . In medicine , however the red flowered variety is preferred¹ .

The leaves and flowers are observed to be promoters of hair growth and aid in healing of ulcers^{2,3,4} . Flowers have been found to be effective in the treatment of arterial hypertension⁵ and to have significant antifertility effect^{6,7} .

According to traditional texts it is well accepted that the leaves and flowers of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* have hair growth promoting^{2,8} and antigreying properties. Moreover, in India the herbal products in the market intended for hair growth include the extract of various parts of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*¹.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL USES :

Table shows that traditional medicinal uses of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

Sr.No.	Place	Parts	Activity
1.	Bangladesh	Decoction of flowers	Regulation of menstrual cycle ⁹
2.	China	Hot water extract of flowers & bark	Emmenagogue ¹⁰⁻¹²
3.	Cook Islands	Hot water extract of flowers & leaves	Ailing infants, Gonorrhea ¹³
4.	East Indies	I. Hot water extract of flowers. II. Leaf Juice + <i>Vernonia Cinerea</i>	I. Regulate menstruation produce abortion ¹¹ II. To stimulate expulsion of afterbirth ¹¹
5.	Fiji	Leaf Juice	Digestion , Diarrhea ¹⁴
6.	French Guiana	Hot extract of flowers	Grippe ¹⁵
7.	Ghana	Peeled Twig	Chewstick ¹⁶
8.	Guadeloupe	Hot extract of flowers	Sodorific , Antitussive ¹⁷
9.	Guam	Leaves	To Promote draining of abscesses ¹⁸
10.	Haiti	Decoction of flowers & leaves	Flu & cough, stomach pain, Eye problems ¹⁹
11.	Hawaii	Flowers	Lactation ²⁰
12.	India	Hot water extract of stems & flowers	Abortion ²⁰ , Antifertility ²¹ , Contraceptive ²² , Diuretic ²³ , Menorrhagia, bronchitis ²⁴ , Emmenagogue ²⁵ , Demulcent ²⁶ , Cough ²⁷ , Abortifacient ²⁸
13.	Indonesia	Juice of leaves & flowers	Menstruation, Abortion ²⁹ , Emmenagogue ³⁰ , Women in labor ²⁹
14.	Japan	Decoction of leaves	Antidiarrheal ³¹
15.	Kuwait	Flowers	Aphrodisiac ³²
16.	Malaysia	Hot water extract of roots & flowers	Fever, Expectorant ¹¹ , Emmenagogue ³³
17.	Mexico	Infusion of Barks & leaves	Dysentery ³⁴
18.	Nepal	Hot water extract of roots	Cough ³⁵
19.	New Britain	Hot extract of flowers	Menstruation ³⁶
20.	New Caledonia	Decoction of flowers	Abortifacient ³⁶
21.	Northern Ireland	Water extract of flowers	To induce labor ³⁷
22.	Peru	Hot Water extract of flowers	Contraceptive, Emmenagogue ³⁸
23.	Philippines	Hot water extract of flowers	Bronchial Catarrh ¹² , Emmollients ³⁹ , Cancerous, Swellings ⁴⁰
24.	Trinidad	Decoction of flowers	Amenorrhea ^{41,42}
25.	Vanuata	Decoction of stems & barks	Menorrhagia ⁴³
26.	Vietnam	Infusion of flowers	Dysmenorrhea ⁴⁴ , Abortive ⁴⁵

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CHEMICAL COMPOSITION

1. Major

Anthocyanins & flavonoids ; cyanidin-3,5-diglucoside, cyanidin-3-sophoroside-5-glucoside, quercetin-3,7-diglucoside, quercetin-3-diglucoside⁴⁶.

2. Other

A cyclopeptide alkaloid⁴⁷ , cyanidin chloride, quercetin, hentriacontane⁴⁸ and vitamins : riboflavin, ascorbic acid & thiamine⁴⁹.

THERAPEUTIC EVALUATION

An uncontrolled clinical trial using the ethanolic extract of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* flowers was carried out on 21 women in the reproductive age group by administering 750 mg/day in 3 divided doses from the 7th to 22nd day of menstrual cycle (Total of 229 cycles). Fourteen women did not have pregnancy for 4 years, whereas 7 women dropped out of the trial.

A clinical study on 30 patients suffering from hypertension and hypercholesterolemia with a Siddha drug, *Anna Pavala Sindhooram*, containing *Japa (Hibiscus rosa-sinensis)* as one of the ingredients, indicated that the drug is efficacious in reducing the cholesterol, phospholipids and triglycerides. On withdrawal of the drug there was slow increase in lipids.

Clinical trials were conducted with *Vidangadi yoga* (a herbal preparation containing *Embelia ribes* seeds. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* flowers and *Ferula foetida* oleo-gum resin) for its antifertility activity. The drug was found to be quite effective with no toxic effects⁵⁰.

MAJOR THERAPEUTIC CLAIMS : Oral contraceptive⁵¹.

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