

California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)

Location: This herb is native to the state of California.

Description: The yellow, pink, orange or red flowers and stems of this herb are used medicinally.

Properties: The California poppy is an anti-inflammatory herb and is calming. The primary chemical in this herb is called californidine, which can be used like a sedative.

Uses: Use the California poppy to treat anxiety and restless leg syndrome.

Doses: This herb can be used in teas and can be found in pharmacies.

Warnings: Do not use this herb if you are pregnant.

Also known as

Eschscholzia californica, Western Poppy, Poppy, and Gold Poppy.

Introduction

The California poppy is the state flower of California, a tender perennial plant bearing blue-green leaves and 2 to 4 inch (5 to 10 cm) wide flowers that open in bright sun and close on cloudy days and at night. California poppy is one of the oldest North American remedies for stress-induced maladies including sensitivity to changes in the weather. The California poppy is considered an ancient plant whose origins are not entirely known. Native Americans in California prized them as a source of food and for the oil that could be extracted from the plant.

Constituents

Alkaloids, principally cryptopine.

Parts Used

Above-ground parts of the plant, dried.

Typical Preparations

Most frequently used as a tincture. Combined with hawthorn and magnesium salts in formulas for relieving anxiety. Also commonly combined with birthwort, night-blooming cereus, kava, lavender, passionflower, St. John's wort, and/or valerian. Can also be taken as a tea or encapsulated.

Summary

California poppy is most often employed to provide restful sleep without the side effects of benzodiazepine drugs such as Librium, Valium, and Xanax. Clinical studies showed that California poppy in combination with hawthorn and magnesium salts is safe, effective, and free of side effects for the treatment of mild to moderate anxiety. The advantage of California poppy is relief from tension without morning grogginess, nausea, vomiting, or constipation.

Precautions

Safety not established during pregnancy or nursing or for children under the age of 6.