

Epimedium (*Epimedium graniflorum*)

Common Names: Goat wort, yin yang huo, horny goatweed.

Description: The yellow green leaves of this herb are used medicinally.

Properties: This herb is commonly used to treat reproductive or sexual malfunctions, stimulate blood circulation and decrease blood pressure.

Uses: Epimedium can be used to treat gonorrhea, diarrhea, urinary incontinence, impotence, infertility, HIV/AIDS and high blood pressure.

Doses: Epimedium comes in tablet form.

Warnings: Some side effects of taking this herb include dizziness, vomiting, dry mouth, nosebleed, and dehydration. Do not take epimedium if you suffer from prostate disease or have high blood pressure.

Epimedium Herb and Powder Profile

Also known as

Epimedium grandiflorum. horny goat weed, xian ling pi, and yin yang huo.

Introduction

Epimedium is an ivy-like ground shrub of the higher and drier areas of China and Tibet. It is in the same plant family as Barberry and Oregon Grape, and its first recorded use is circa 200 B.C.E. in China. The name of the herb in Mandarin, yin yang huo, roughly corresponds to "weed for licentious goat." Legend has it that a goat herder discovered the properties of epimedium by observing his billy goats' uncontrollable sexual appetites after they grazed on the herb. In Traditional Chinese Medicine epimedium is used to increase the Yang (outwardly directed energies) when there is not a deficiency of Yin (containing energies). For instance, it would be used to enhance male sexual performance, but not in a man taking a diuretic, such as Lasix (furosemide). It has traditionally been regarded as acrid and sweet tasting, but then warming, and it has been historically used according to Chinese Medicine to benefit the kidneys, bones, tendons, muscles, mental fatigue and poor memory.

Constituents

Fats, saponins, and essential oil, with trace amounts of epimedins, epimedesides, icariin, magnflorin, and quercetin.

Parts Used

The dried leaf.

Typical Preparations

Teas, tinctures, encapsulations of the leaf or powder.

Summary

Modern Chinese herbal medicine uses epimedium (usually in combination with other herbs) not just to treat impotence, but also for asthma, bronchitis cervical dysplasia, congestive heart failure, leukorrhea, leukopenia, and viral infections of the heart. Exactly how the herb works is not known, but laboratory studies with animals suggest that it increases production of the pleasure chemical dopamine and decreases production of the stress hormone cortisol. The effects on male sexual performance are most closely tied to the chemical icariin, but the whole herb rather than a product standardized for icariin alone is needed for best effect. The herb also contains some of the same chemicals found in various "corti-slim" products.

Precautions

Take no more than the recommended dose. More is not necessarily better. Maximum erectile strength is possible when blood pressure is normal and taking an excess of epimedium may increase blood pressure and heart rate but does not have an incrementally increasing effect on erection. Not recommended for long term use.