

# Periwinkle Herb Profile

## Also known as

Vinca minor, Vinca, Common Periwinkle, and Myrtle.

## Introduction

The garden periwinkle is the source of a chemical that can be turned into vinpocetine, a natural treatment for aging minds. Originating in Madagascar but not growing wild in warm climates around the world, periwinkle has enjoyed a variety of medicinal applications. In Europe, periwinkle teas were used as a folk remedy for diabetes. In Hawaii, the plant was boiled to make a poultice used as a bandage to stop bleeding. In China, periwinkles became cough medicine, and in India, they were juiced to make a remedy to stop the pain of wasp stings. Throughout the Caribbean, periwinkles were used to treat infections and as a protection against voodoo magic.

## Constituents

The periwinkle contains vincamine, precursor chemical vinpocetine, in its leaves and seeds.

## Parts Used

Leaves, seeds.

## Typical Preparations

More often used as tincture, can be encapsulated or served as tea.

## Summary

There is some clinical evidence that the periwinkle chemical vinpocetine can increase blood flow to the brain, increasing oxygenation, and also protect brain cells from damage by a chemical called phosphodiesterase. In one study, a majority of 203 clinical study volunteers with dementia experienced measurable improvement after treatment. Vinpocetine is also commended for memory enhancement in health people, and tried as a means of reducing brain injury after strokes.

## Precautions

Periwinkle is the source of vinpocetine; it is not pure vinpocetine. If you use the whole herb you are relying on a rounded blend of healing chemicals found in the minimally processed plant. Periwinkle does not cause any known interactions with blood thinning medications (such as aspirin, Coumarin, Plavix, Ticlid, or Trental), although vinpocetine extracted from it does. Vinpocetine can cause either increased or decreased bleeding depending on the medication; this is why whole periwinkle is preferred.

