

Pygeum (*Prunus africanum*)

Location: Native to Africa, wild, pygeum trees are classified as environmentally threatened. Some effort is being made to grow pygeum on plantations, but not all herbal products companies are careful in choosing a sustainable supplier.

Description: Pygeum is an evergreen tree that grows to a height of 120 feet; it has oblong leaves, white flowers, and red berries. The bark is the part used in herbal medicine.

Properties: Pygeum is an anti-inflammatory for the prostate gland.

Uses: Pygeum has been shown to diminish nighttime urination, urinary frequency, and residual urine volume. Benefits of pygeum for specific health conditions include benign prostate hypertrophy and prostate cancer.

Doses: Pygeum is available in capsule form, usually formulated with saw palmetto. The usual recommended dose is 50 to 100 milligrams taken twice daily.

Warnings: This herb should be used under the supervision of a health-care professional. Frequent monitoring of prostate health is essential during treatment of prostate disorders with pygeum or any other herb.

Pygeum Bark

Also known as- *Pygeum africanum*, *Prunus africana*, and African Plum.

Introduction

Pygeum is an evergreen tree in the rose family growing up to 150 feet (50 m) tall, found across Africa at elevations of 3,000 feet (1,000 m) or higher. South African tribes used pygeum bark to great "old man's disease," better known in mainstream medicine as benign prostatic hyperplasia (prostate enlargement).

Constituents

Pygeum yields phytosterols (e.g., beta-sitosterol) that exert anti-inflammatory effects by inhibiting production of pro-inflammatory prostaglandins in the prostate. Pygeum also contains pentacyclic triterpenes (ursolic and oleanic acids) that prevent swelling (edema), and ferulic acid esters (n-docosanol and tetracosanol) that reduce prolactin levels and block the accumulation of cholesterol in the prostate.

Parts Used

Bark. Chopped bark may be slightly more effective for treating prostate infections. Bark powder may be slightly more effective for treating prostate enlargement.

Typical Preparations

Tinctures. Pygeum can be used with saw palmetto, stinging nettle root, and/or bee pollen to treat benign prostatic hyperplasia, and made into hair loss prevention shampoos with saw palmetto and stinging nettle root. Typically younger men (under 30) with prostate infections need about twice as large a dose

as older men (over 50) with prostate enlargement. Sometimes found in encapsulation, although rare. May be taken as a tea, but most will find it distasteful.

Summary

At least 53 clinical studies confirm the usefulness of pygeum in treating prostate problems. In one study involving 263 men with age-related prostate enlargement, taking at least 100 milligrams of pygeum extract (equivalent to 1-2 teaspoons of tincture) for 60 days:

Precautions

Taken at recommended dosages, pygeum is non-toxic. In rare instances, there may be stomach upset, headache, nausea, or visual disturbances when the first dose is taken, but this effect usually goes away and does not recur with the second dose.