

Tansy

Summary

Tansy was used medicinally by the ancient Greeks, included in Charlemagne's personal herb garden, and cultivated throughout the middle ages as a remedy for a wide range of ailments. It was also used cosmetically as a face wash to lighten skin, as a culinary herb to flavor puddings and omelets, and as a bug repellent, frequently packed into coffins to repel worms and other insects and thus help preserve remains. Today, the medicinal properties formerly attributed to tansy have been largely discredited, although it is still in use as an effective insect repellent and can be an asset in the garden as a companion plant for cucumbers, squash, roses and some berries to help keep the plants pest-free. Modern herbalists warn against its medicinal use because all species of tansy are toxic and can cause hallucinations, spasms, convulsions, and even death in large doses.

Precautions

Tansy contains the toxic substance thujone, which may cause death in large enough doses. There have been reports of young women dying after ingesting a strong cup of tansy tea. Not to be used while pregnant and its use is only recommended under the supervision of someone qualified in the administration of this substance.

The active constituents are toxic in large doses, and it's difficult to judge the amount of thujone the most toxic of its elements without a chemical analysis. Its most common medicinal use was to 'bring on a stalled period', a euphemism for abortifacient. A strong tea made of tansy leaves and flowers can cause miscarriage, and there have been reports of deaths in women attempting to use the tea in this way. Aside from treating menstrual problems, tansy also is useful as a vermifuge, treating worms in children, and as a poultice to treat skin infections. Like feverfew, tansy contains parthenolides, compounds which may help prevent migraines. However, the volatile oil can be toxic even used externally, so care should be taken when using tansy for medicinal purposes. Despite these warnings, tansy is also used in cooking, and in small amounts adds a spicy tang to salads akin to cinnamon or nutmeg.

Susun Weed writes in her book [The Child bearing Year](#) one midwife reports that a Tansy tincture definitely induces abortion even when menstruation is several weeks overdue. She uses 10 drops of the tincture in a cup of warm water every 2 hours until bleeding begins. This means during the night too, setting the alarm at two hour intervals.

Dosing:

Tansy should be used with caution, and at first signs of toxicity herbs should be reduced or discontinued. Also I think it would be best to use

tansy for no longer than 5 days, 7 max. Also, I think its probably a herb best used by itself.

The dried herb or tincture may be used. All parts of the plant are used.

The tincture is very difficult to find, unless it is home made, it is unlikely that it will be found on the shelves of any store. I have heard that it is available only to practitioners of herbal medicine. The bulk herb, for making tea can be found, although not all stores will carry it. I know that some places do carry it. I have also found the potted herb for sale at my local garden center, and now have it growing in a pot in my garden (it likes to spread if not contained)

To make a tea, use $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 teaspoon (tsp) of the dried herb per cup of water 3-4 times a day. For up to 7 days.⁴

Tincture: $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp in a cup of warm water 3-4 times a day.⁴

Powder: 3-8 size #0 capsules 3-4 times per day⁴

The essential oil of this herb is known to be poisonous, and should NEVER be taken orally/internally, because it can kill you even in small doses. This herb, as any of these herbs, commands respect.

Tansy is some times used in conjunction with other herbs like Blue Cohosh and Pennyroyal. But again, my opinion, is that it is a herb that should be used as a simple (which means by itself)

Tansy should not be used in combination with Vitamin C, as they can counteract each other.

*Signs of toxicity specific to tansy:

Nausea, vomiting, inflammation of the stomach lining, dilated pupils, weakened and/or rapid pulse, convulsions, coma. ⁴