



CENTELLA ASIATICA A VEGETABLE MEDICINE

Centella asiatica was described as a panacea 3000 years ago in Ayurveda, Indian traditional medicine. A panacea is a medicine against a multitude of diseases. In Malaysia Centella is called asiatica "pegaga". In many countries, this plant is sold under the name gotu kola. Centella asiatica grows on the Indian subcontinent, in Asia, Australia, and on the island of New Guinea. The Papuans call it daun pegagan. Pegagan is in fact the Malay name. Daun means "leaf". Many medications are indicated by the appearance such as leaf, or fruit. In English the plant is called Indian pennywort.



Edible medicinal herb

In many countries in South East Asia, this plant is seen as fresh, wild vegetable. Centella asiatica is also eaten in Malaysia as a salad leaf for its medicinal qualities. The leaves are seen as a tasty vegetable or herb. Furthermore, they are used as tea leaves. Often the plant is sold as tea herb, dried with stems, so that it can not be eaten as dried vegetables.

Different extracts, different efficacy

Centella asiatica has antibacterial qualities against the two bacteria *Aspergillus Niger* and *Bacillus Subtilis*, according to scientific research. In this study it wasn't actually tested which bacteria can be controlled with *centella asiatica*. Scientists wanted to know the difference between an ethanol, methanol and water extract. Each extract has different medicinal properties. It appears that a methanol extract of *centella asiatica* is stronger than the other two, and that a water extract is the least strong. You could conclude from this that it is not useful to make tea from gotu kola, but that is not the case. A tea is made with hot water and that has not been researched; only the use of cold water has been investigated. Various research shows that when a hot water tea is used, there are many more active ingredients in the water. This is due, for example, to fibers retaining substances. As soon as the fibers become hot, the substances can be released more easily and as a result the bioavailability for humans of the substances increases. In virtually all scientific studies, cold water is used when the efficacy of medicinal plants is studied, while in practice people prepare hot tea.

Centella asiatica is stimulating for the brain

Gotu kola has long been seen as a plant that supports memory and prevents mental fatigue. These applications are endorsed by scientific research. *Centella asiatica* is a plant that supports the workings of the brain, according to scientific research. *Centella asiatica* was compared with plants such as ginseng and ginkgo biloba and it appeared that these plants have properties that restore the functioning of brain cells. Problems such as memory problems, learning problems and other cognitive functions such as thinking are improved when doing a cure with *centella asiatica*. A cure must last at least 4 weeks to show effectiveness. In theory, neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, could be reduced in symptoms, if people drink tea from *centella asiatica* regularly.

Gotu kola, good for the skin

Gotu kola is traditionally used for abrasions, cuts, burns, nasty scars, psoriasis and eczema. Gotu kola is one of the many leaves that are used to do wounds. Wound healing is a complicated process from a scientific point of view. It has to do with blood clotting, inflammation prevention, cytokine production, cell division, production of the right new skin cells, the redesign of the cellular skin matrix and angiogenesis or the creation of new blood vessels. Triterpene components from *centella asiatica* have shown in a particularly high number of scientific studies that they support all these properties of wound healing. The synthesis of collagen or new skin is applicable in all types of skin diseases, such as psoriasis, eczema, abrasions, scar tissue treatment and burns. Because *centella asiatica* has proven itself as a plant that supports the functioning of the skin, *centella asiatica* can be used in almost all skin problems. If you actually want to use *centella asiatica* for skin problems, it is important to consider a number of things. Another nice scientific skin research shows that *centella asiatica* works in cellulite. 60 patients were given an extract of gotu kola on the skin four times a day. After four months it appeared that the symptoms of cellulitis had decreased significantly in 85% of the participants in the study. For extracting scientific research, extracts from *centella asiatica* are used. That helps against skin conditions. But you can also make a pulp from gotu kola yourself and put it on the skin. If you buy gotu kola over the internet, it is easy to store fairly large quantities.

Furthermore, it is wise not only to use gotu kola. Important medicinal herbs for skin problems are yarrow, but also leaf cabbage. White cabbage leaves, or green cabbage, red cabbage, cauliflower leaf, contain a lot of medicinal substances that are good for the skin. It is also worth considering the use of bandages to keep the gotu kola pulp or cabbage leaves in place, for example during sleep or at other times that one is lying.



Centella asiatica against cancer

Scientists see that gotu cola works against cancer in different stadium of tumor growth. It allows researchers to name centella asiatica an anticancer plant. Cancer tumors no longer grow when it comes into contact with centella asiatica. This may have to do with the antioxidant effect. The medicinal herb has been tested on various types of cancer, including melanoma or skin cancer. Lung tumors were also treated with an extract of the leaves of centella asiatica. The development of the cancer cells was called to a halt. That is an important characteristic because cancer tumors are a form of proliferation and continue to grow. If growth has stopped, an important step has been taken in the healing process of the dreaded disease cancer. Researchers saw that mice that had been given a form of lung cancer showed much less tumors when treated with centella asiatica. Incidentally, almost all cancer researchers say that the regular method to treat cancer is disappointing. Every year in the Netherlands more than 40,000 people who have undergone cancer treatment, die. This indicates that regular health care in this area is not achieving enough success. That is why scientists are conducting massive research into the anticancer activity of medicinal plants.

Gotu cola against thrombosis

Thrombosis is caused by platelet aggregation in the veins. This narrows the veins. Many people take medicines against it. It appears that centella asiatica effectively counteracts the aggregation of platelets. Thrombosis is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. That is why many people take medication against it. It turns out that these people are just as well or better helped with an extract of centella asiatica.

Gotu cola, fighter of pathogenic microorganisms

Scientific research shows that centella asiatica combats various pathogenic bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites. That is important to know because there are already many germs resistant to synthetic drugs. In addition, it is good to know that pathogenic micro-organisms play a role in various disease processes, such as cancer. The fact that centella asiatica has antibacterial activity is therefore an important medical fact.

Medicinal active substances in centella asiatica

The most important medicinal substances in gotu cola are: madeascenic acid, asiatic acid triterpenes and their derivatives such as madecassoside, asiaticoside and triterpene ester glycosides. Furthermore, it contains components such as alpha-spine, alphacopaenic, betacaryophyllene, bornylacetate, beta-eleciium, betapinene, germacrene-D, bicyclo-nucleic and transbetafarnesean. It further contains many polyacetylene components including 8-acetoxycarinalol. The roots of centella asiatica are rich in amino acids, such as glutamide, serine, alanine, threonine, aspartide, histidine and lysine. In the field of vitamins, the plant contains vitamin A (retinol), vitamin B1 (thiamine), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin C (ascorbic acid, vitamin B5 (niacin) and carotene, a precursor of vitamin A.

Enzyme processes and centella asiatica

Centella asiatica appears to be protective for the heart, according to scientific research. One of the reasons is that, all kinds of enzymatic processes that are important for the heart, are disrupted by industrial products such as margarine, refined sugar, trans fats, deep-fry products, and many other supermarket items. Much healthier it is to compose meals and snacks of vegetables, fruits, herbs, nuts and seeds, or pure natural products. The antioxidant enzymes SuperOxideDismutase, catalase and glutathione are better protected if regular centella asiatica is used. The mitochondria are also important. These mitochondria are the energy suppliers of our human body, of all body cells in particular. It appears that people with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease have less well-functioning mitochondria. Centella asiatica can restore the mitochondria so that we feel more energetic and the body's cells have more energy to fight all kinds of diseases.



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