

# **CRATAEGUS OXYACANTHA HAWTHORN**



**Hawthorn is a plant. The leaves, berries, and flowers of hawthorn are used to make medicine.**

**Hawthorn is used for diseases of the heart and blood vessels such as congestive heart failure (CHF), chest pain, and irregular heartbeat. It is also may be used to treat both low blood pressure and high blood pressure, "hardening of the arteries" (atherosclerosis), and high cholesterol. So far, research suggests that hawthorn might be effective in treating congestive heart failure, but there hasn't been enough research on other heart-related uses to know if it is effective for them.**

**Some people use hawthorn for digestive system complaints such as indigestion, diarrhea, and stomach pain. It is also used to reduce anxiety, as a sedative, to increase urine output, and for menstrual problems.**

**Hawthorn is also used to treat tapeworm and other intestinal infections.**

**Some people apply hawthorn to the skin for boils, sores, and ulcers. Hawthorn preparations are used as a wash for sores, itching, and frostbite.**

**You will find hawthorn among the ingredients in candied fruit slices, jam, jelly, and wine.**

**Before taking hawthorn, talk with your healthcare professional if you take any medications. It has major interactions with several prescription medications.**



**How does it work?**

**Hawthorn can help improve the amount of blood pumped out of the heart during contractions, widen the blood vessels, and increase the transmission of nerve signals.**

Hawthorn also seems to have blood pressure-lowering activity, according to early research. It seems to cause relaxing of the blood vessels farther from the heart. It seems that this effect is due to a component in hawthorn called proanthocyanidin.

Research suggests that hawthorn can lower cholesterol, low density lipoprotein (LDL, or "bad cholesterol"), and triglycerides (fats in the blood). It seems to lower accumulation of fats in the liver and the aorta (the largest artery in the body, located near the heart). Hawthorn fruit extract may lower cholesterol by increasing the excretion of bile, reducing the formation of cholesterol, and enhancing the receptors for LDLs. It also seems to have antioxidant activity.

## **USES & EFFECTIVENESS**

**Possibly Effective for...**

**Heart failure.** Some specific hawthorn products (Faros 300 by Lichtwer Pharma, Crataegutt forte by Wilmer Schwabe Pharmaceuticals, or HeartCare, Nature's Way) seem to improve some heart failure symptoms in some people with mild to moderate heart failure. However, other research shows that these products may actually worsen heart failure and increase the risk of death or hospitalization.

**Insufficient Evidence to Rate Effectiveness for...**

**Anxiety.** There is some evidence that hawthorn, combined with magnesium and California poppy (a product called Sympathyl, which is not available in the U.S.), might be useful in treating mild to moderate anxiety disorders.

**Chest pain ("angina").** Some research suggests that taking hawthorn might reduce chest pain.

**High blood pressure** Some research shows that hawthorn might reduce blood pressure, but other research shows no benefit.

**Blood circulation problems.**

**Decreased heart function.**

**High cholesterol.**

**Irregular heartbeat (arrhythmias).**

**Muscle spasms.**

**Sedation.**

**Other conditions.**

**More evidence is needed to rate the effectiveness of hawthorn for these uses.**

**Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database rates effectiveness based on scientific evidence according to the following scale: Effective, Likely Effective, Possibly Effective, Possibly Ineffective, Likely Ineffective, and Insufficient Evidence to Rate (detailed description of each of the ratings).**

### **SIDE EFFECTS**

**Hawthorn is POSSIBLY SAFE for most adults when used at recommended doses short-term (up to 16 weeks). It is not known whether hawthorn is safe when used long-term.**

**In some people, hawthorn can cause nausea, stomach upset, fatigue, sweating, headache, dizziness, palpitations, nosebleeds, insomnia, agitation, and other problems.**

### **SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS & WARNINGS**

**Pregnancy and breast-feeding: Not enough is known about the use of hawthorn during pregnancy and breast-feeding. Stay on the safe side and avoid use.**

**Heart disease: Hawthorn can interact with many prescription drugs used to treat heart disease. If you have a heart condition, don't use hawthorn without the recommendation of your healthcare provider.**

### **DOSING**





**The following doses have been studied in scientific research:**

**BY MOUTH:**

**For heart failure, some specific hawthorn products (Faros 300 by Lichtwer Pharma, Crataegutt forte by Wilmer Schwabe Pharmaceuticals, or HeartCare, Nature's Way) have been used in doses of 160 mg to 1800 mg divided and taken in 2-3 doses daily. These doses have been shown to improve symptoms of heart failure in some people, but they have also been shown to increase the risk of death or being hospitalized due to heart failure.**

**INTERACTIONS**

**Medications for male sexual dysfunction (Phosphodiesterase-5 Inhibitors) Interaction Rating: Major Do not take this combination.**

**Hawthorn might decrease blood pressure. Some medications for male sexual dysfunction can also decrease blood pressure. Taking hawthorn along with medications for male sexual dysfunction might cause your blood pressure to go too low.**

**Some medications for male sexual dysfunction include sildenafil (Viagra), tadalafil (Cialis), and vardenafil (Levitra).**

**Medications that increase blood flow to the heart (Nitrates) Interaction Rating: Major Do not take this combination.**

**Hawthorn increases blood flow. Taking hawthorn with medications that also increase blood flow to the heart might increase the chance of dizziness and lightheadedness.**

**Some of these medications that increase blood flow to the heart include nitroglycerin (Nitro-Bid, Nitro-Dur, Nitrostat) and isosorbide (Imdur, Isordil, Sorbitrate).**

**Digoxin (Lanoxin) Interaction Rating: Moderate Be cautious with this combination. Talk with your health provider.**

**Digoxin (Lanoxin) helps the heart beat more strongly. Hawthorn also seems to affect the heart. Taking hawthorn along with digoxin (Lanoxin) might increase the effects of digoxin and increase the risk of side effects. Do not take hawthorn if you are taking digoxin (Lanoxin).**

**Medications for high blood pressure (Beta-blockers) Interaction Rating: Moderate Be cautious with this combination. Talk with your health provider.**

**Hawthorn might decrease blood pressure. Taking hawthorn along with medication for high blood pressure might cause your blood pressure to go too low.**

**Some medications for high blood pressure include atenolol (Tenormin), metoprolol (Lopressor, Toprol XL), nadolol (Corgard), propranolol (Inderal), and others.**

**Medications for high blood pressure (Calcium channel blockers) Interaction Rating: Moderate Be cautious with this combination. Talk with your health provider.**

**Hawthorn might decrease blood pressure. Taking hawthorn along with medication for high blood pressure might cause your blood pressure to go too low.**

**Some medications for high blood pressure include nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia), verapamil (Calan, Isoptin, Verelan), diltiazem (Cardizem), isradipine (DynaCirc), felodipine (Plendil), amlodipine (Norvasc), and others.**

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