

# Damiana

## Turnera Diffusa



### **Damiana Benefits**

*Damiana leaves have been used as an aphrodisiac and to boost sexual potency by the native peoples of Mexico, including the Mayan Indians and is used for both male and female sexual stimulation, increased energy, asthma, depression, impotence and menstrual problems.*

Damiana is a small shrub with aromatic leaves found on dry, sunny, rocky hillsides in south Texas, Southern California, Mexico, and Central America. Damiana leaves have been used as an aphrodisiac and to boost sexual potency by the native peoples of Mexico, including the Mayan Indians. The two species used in herbal healing, both of which are referred to as damiana, are *Turnera aphrodisiaca* and *Turnera diffusa*.

Historically damiana has been used to relieve anxiety, nervousness, and mild depression, especially if these symptoms have a sexual component. The herb is also used as a general tonic to improve wellness.

Damiana has also been used traditionally to improve digestion and to treat constipation, as in larger doses it is thought to have a mild laxative effect.

It is well known in southwestern cultures as a sexuality tonic and is recommended by many top herbalists. It stimulates the intestinal tract and brings oxygen to the genital area. It also increases energy

levels which does a lot to restore libido and desire. In women, Damiana often restores the ability to achieve orgasm. Damiana is used primarily as an energy tonic and an aphrodisiac for both men and women.

Damiana has a dual effect. It can work quickly to stimulate the genital area by enriching the oxygen supply. Longer term use can improve sexual fitness and performance.

The libido-boosting power of damiana hasn't been tested in humans, although a liquor made from the leaves has long been used as an aphrodisiac in Mexico. In animal studies, extracts of damiana speeded up the mating behavior of "sexually sluggish" or impotent male rats. It had no effect on sexually potent rats.

The chemical composition of damiana is complex and all of the components have not been completely identified. However, the known make-up is 0.5-1% volatile oil, flavonoids, gonzalitosin, arbutin, tannin and damianin (a brown bitter substance). It also contains essential oils (containing cineol, cymol, pinene), cyanogenic glycosides, thymol and trace amounts of phosphorus.

How damiana works as an aphrodisiac is currently not known. It is also claimed that when drunk as a tea it has a relaxing effect not-unlike low doses of cannabis.

#### **Damiana Herb Notes / Side Effects**

Damiana appears to be safe when taken occasionally as a sex booster. It has a long history of traditional medicinal and food use with no harmful consequences reported for moderate quantities.

It is thought that large quantities of Damiana taken internally may cause insomnia and headaches and in some cases liver damage. However, no rigorous scientific studies have examined the effects of long-term use of this herb.

#### **Latin Names**

Turnera diffusa

#### **Common Names**

Damiana, Hierba de la pastora, Mexican damiana, Mizibcoc, Old woman's broom.

**Properties**

Mild purgative, diuretic, tonic, stimulant, hypochondriasis, aphrodisiac, alterative, aperient, carminative, cholagogue, emmenagogue, laxative, nervine, urinary antiseptic and yang tonic.

**Indicated for**

Sexual stimulation, increases energy, oxygenates genital area, asthma, depression, impotence and menstrual problems. Nervous dyspepsia, atonic constipation, debility and lethargy. Specifically indicated in anxiety neurosis with a predominant sexual factor.