



HAWTHORN CRATAEGUS SPP.

HEART MEDICINE



Sitting at the bookends of the time of growth, she guards the seasonal shifts – but rooted at the edge of the field, she also guards the border between the wild and the hearth. She loves humans, and thrives with our touch, but she remains forever untamed...
— Guido Masé, 2014

INTRO

With autumn come Hawthorn berries (technically pomes)... Hawthorn is a mythical tree, surrounded by folklore, and part of the Rose family (Roseaceae). There are nearly 300 species of Hawthorn, which takes its name from the Old English term haw, which means “hedge,” alluding to the popularity of using the Hawthorn tree as a hedgerow shrub in England and Ireland.

The white Hawthorn flowers usually appear in May - the reason why Hawthorn is also commonly named "Mayblossom".

Hawthorn is used for medicine in Arabic medicine, Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, Celtic herbalism and many Native American tribes.

Parts used: Fresh or dried berries (technically pomes), flowering tops, leaves.

Some of the constituents: Bioflavonoids (vitexin, rutin, quercetin, and hyperoside), triterpenoids, oligomeric proanthocyanins (epicatechin and procyanidins), phenolic acids, polyphenols, tannins

Harvesting: The flowers and leaves when they bloom in spring. The berries when they are dark red in autumn.





TASTE

Tastes tell a story

Hawthorn berries taste slightly sweet and sour.
Hawthorn flowers are mostly sweet.

The sweetness indicates a nourishing and
strengthening property.

The sourness indicates a cooling, antioxidant
quality.

AFFINITIES

The special relationship with certain parts of the body

- Cardiovascular system: heart and blood
- Nervous system
- Digestive system.

Heart chakra.





KEY HERBAL ACTIONS

How the herb interacts with the body

- **Heart tonic and trophorestorative.** Hawthorn strengthens the heart and the cardiovascular system, and builds the structural integrity of the tissues. It has a mild vasodilating effect to help distribute the blood, and relieves tension.
- **Astringent.** Hawthorn astringes the tissues (due to the tannins), so it increases the tightness or tone of the tissues.
- **Nervine.** Hawthorn relaxes and nourishes the nervous system. Especially the flowers. It is especially beneficial when stress affects the heart. It helps to strengthen the parasympathetic nervous system.
- **Antioxidant.** Hawthorn is full of flavonoids: antioxidants that can fight free radicals in the body, reducing the effects of oxidation and inflammation. Especially the flowers and leaves.
- **Digestive.** Hawthorn stimulates digestion and moves the liver's ability to create bile.





MAIN USES

- Prevention of heart disease
- Nourishing and strenghtening the emotional heart (especially the flowers). For the "weak hearted" or during grief and sadness.
- Reduce blood pressure (by opening and relaxing the blood vessels). Or, so it's said, increase low blood pressure, because it tones and strenghtens the tissues
- Prevention of the thickening and hardening of the arterial walls (anti-oxident)
- Improving coronary circulation (chest pain)
- Strenghtening heart muscle
- Support after heart attack

- Improving metabolism and stimulation of digestion of heavier foods.
- Nervousness, insomnia, anxiety
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Science

Hawthorn is one of the most studied herbal medicines, particularly for cardiovascular health. Several clinical trials and meta-analyses indicate that Hawthorn extracts can improve symptoms of mild to moderate Congestive Heart Failure. Patients often report less fatigue, better exercise tolerance, and improved quality of life.





THE ENERGETICS

More than just chemistry

Every herb has its own energetic qualities—warming, cooling, moistening, drying, relaxing, astringent. Understanding your constitution and the qualities of herbs allows you to choose the ones that work most effectively for you.

Hawthorn is:

- Cooling
- Drying (especially flowers and leaves)
- Astringent to the tissues, but relaxant to the nerves.

CONTRA- INDICATIONS

Navigating safety in herbal use

- Blood pressure or heart medication
- Bleeding disorders or hypotension
- Anticoagulants, hypotensives, CNS depressants, alcohol, insulin, vasodilators, hypoglycaemics.





SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The message of the plant

Hawthorn carries the resonance of a fully connected and integrated heart, helping us deal with and move through grief, a lack of love, or a broken heart and reestablishes our connection to the heart of Mother Earth.

Its soft white blossoms and rich red berries hide sharp thorns, teaching us how to open to love while protecting our boundaries.

In Celtic and Irish folklore, Hawthorn is a tree of the Otherworld. Lone Hawthorn trees, especially those standing in fields or near wells, were considered entrances to the faerie realm. Cutting them down or disturbing them was thought to bring bad luck, illness, or even death. Farmers would often plough around a solitary Hawthorn rather than risk angering the spirits.

Hawthorn was said to ward off evil spirits and protect against lightning, storms, and witchcraft. And Beltane celebrations tied ribbons to Hawthorn's branches to invite blessings, fertility, and renewal.

The Hawthorn tree has the profound capacity to draw its strength from deep within the soil, gathering the grounding and nutritive substance of the love from Mother Earth. In this way, the Hawthorn carries the steady, constant heartbeat of the Earth and aligns our own hearts with this rhythm. Hawthorn is deeply rooted and has the striking ability to withstand harsh conditions, a reminder of resilience.





RECIPES & FORMULAS

Preparation & dosage

Hawthorn is best for long term use. The berries can be made into jams, wines and more. They can also be powdered. For teas:

- The leaves and flowes can be made into an infusion with boiling water (let it sit for at least 15 min)
- The berries need to be decocted for optimal extraction: bring them to a boil and let them simmer for at least 20 min.

Hawthorn tincture

Making your own tincture is easier than you might think. Check out the video in this hub about tincture making. There you will find the instructions.

For the flowers and leaves: use 30% alcohol.

Hawthorn flower essence

Create your own flower essence....

[CREATE YOUR OWN FLOWER ESSENCE](#)





Hawthorn Oxymel

Ingredients:

- 1 part dried Hawthorn berries
- 1 part raw apple cider vinegar
- 1 part raw honey

Instructions:

1. Fill a clean jar one-quarter full with dried berries.
2. Add equal parts vinegar and honey to the jar, ensuring the berries are submerged.
3. Seal the jar and shake well.
4. Store in a cool, dark place for 2–4 weeks, shaking daily.
5. Strain and store in a glass container.

Hawthorn Syrup

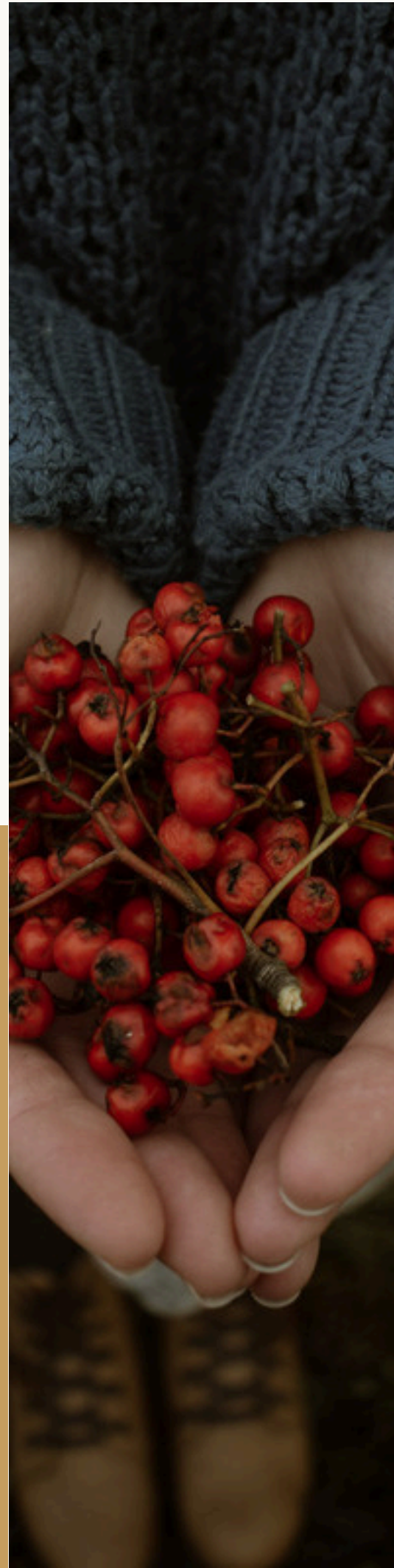
Recipe from James Green, *The Herbal Medicine-Maker's Handbook*.

Ingredients: 50 g Hawthorn, 500 ml water, 200 g white sugar

Steps:

1. Simmer Hawthorn in water for 30 min to extract the herbs.
2. Strain and reduce the liquid to 125 ml.
3. Heat gently with sugar until fully dissolved and syrup measures 125 ml.
4. Pour into sterilized bottles and let cool.

Dose: 1 tsp – 1 tbsp, up to 3× daily.
Keep in the fridge.





Digestive decoction

Ingredients: 1 tablespoon Burdock root, 1 tablespoon Dandelion root, 1 tablespoon Hawthorn berries, 1L water

Steps:

1. Add all ingredients together in a saucepan.
2. Bring to boil, then simmer for at least 30 min.
3. Strain and enjoy.

Relaxing tea

Combine 1 part Hawthorn flowers and 1 part Linden. Let it steep for about 20 minutes while it's covered with a lid, as the volatile oils and resins of the herbs will evaporate off with the water and you will lose a portion of the medicine in the steam.

Or take as a tincture.

Heart strengthening tea

Mix Hawthorn and Rose in equal parts, or to taste. Let it steep for about 20 minutes while it's covered with a lid, as the volatile oils and resins of the herbs will evaporate off with the water and you will lose a portion of the medicine in the steam.

Or create a tincture.





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