

FENNEL



Plant/Part: Herb/Seeds (Source: China, Australia)

Latin Name: Foeniculum Vulgare

Family: Umbelliferae

Extraction: Distillation

AROMA: Floral, herby and slightly spicy.

PROPERTIES: Has a sweet aniseed-like aroma which makes it pleasant for skin care. For massage where there is cellulite and for the digestive system, especially the dreaded wind. An excellent body cleanser, ridding the system of poisonous toxins resulting from excess food and alcohol. It is great for hangovers acting as a tonic to the liver, kidneys and spleen. Clears poisons from insect and serpent bites too! Helpful in reducing diets as it seems effective in dispersing cellulitis through its diuretic action. May also dissolve kidney Stones.

Works well on stomach ailments since it is a tonic to the digestion. It is good for hiccups, nausea, vomiting and colic. A clearing action on the Intestines helps to relieve constipation and flatulence. As an antispasmodic and expectorant, may be useful in cold conditions and bronchitis as well as whooping cough. Said to activate the glandular system by imitating the hormone oestrogen. This could make it helpful with pre menstrual tension, scanty periods, menopausal problems and low sexual response.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Anethol, Anisic Acid, Anisic aldehyde, Pinene, Camphene, Estragol, Fenone, Phellandrene.

PRECAUTIONS: Slight dermal toxicity; use _ recommended dilution or less. Best avoided in pregnancy and people suffering epilepsy.

BLENDS: Basil, Geranium, Lavender, Lemon, Rose, Rosemary, Sandalwood.

USES:

Digestive: stimulates the production of gastric juices (carminative), aids digestion, relieves constipation (laxative), tones the spleen and the liver. used for indigestion, colic, dyspepsia, flatulence, nausea

Genito-Urinary: stimulates the production of urine (diuretic) and menstrual blood (emmenagogue), eases cramps. according to tisserand, helps to dissolve kidney stones. helpful in menopausal problems.

Circulation: improves, cleanses the blood (depurative).

Respiratory: antiseptic, antispasmodic, helps to expel mucus. used for asthma and bronchitis.



Skin/Hair: anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, stimulates circulation, used for dull and oily skin, bruises, cellulite, as well as wrinkles.

Other: used for obesity. improves lactation.

Caution: narcotic in large doses. should be avoided by epileptics and during pregnancy.

Fennel (*Foeniculum Vulgare*) takes its name from the Latin word for hay, as it was frequently used in animal fodder. It is a plant of the same family - umbelliferae - as Aniseed, Caraway and Coriander, and it has a pleasantly aniseedy flavour. However, Aniseed is a fairly toxic oil, and Fennel is safe in use, which gives it far greater practical value. The plant grows wild in many parts of Europe, from the Mediterranean, where it originated, through to parts of Russia. It is particularly happy growing near the sea.

The essential oil is distilled from the crushed seeds, and contains anethol, fenchone, estragol, camphene and pheiandrene. Some of the properties attributed to Fennel in the past appear to have more to do with superstition than science. For example, it was thought to give protection from witchcraft, and was hung over cottage doors to keep away the evil eye. Snakes were thought to rub themselves against Fennel plants to improve their eyesight, and it was generally thought to improve the sight of humans, too. Many old herbals say that Fennel is an antidote to 'all manner of venom' (Banckes) such as snake-bite, poisonous plants and mushrooms, and we know it now as an important anti-toxic oil. Perhaps one of its most valuable applications in the 20th century is in counterbalancing alcoholic poisoning, and it has played an important part in the treatment and rehabilitation of alcoholics. It may also help in gout, etc., to prevent the build-up of toxic wastes in the body which precede the inflammatory condition of the joints.



Like other members of the umbelliferae family, Fennel is an excellent carminative and digestive remedy, and will quickly give relief from nausea, flatulence, indigestion, colic and hiccoughs. The best way to use Fennel for digestive problems is in the form of fennel tea. It has a tonic effect on the smooth muscle of the intestine, which is valuable in colitis, and in some cases of constipation, as it strengthens peristalsis {the rhythmic contractions of the intestinal muscle which move the partially-digested food mass through the intestines). Its action on the intestines is basically normalising.

Another application of fennel that connects with digestion, is its reputation for decreasing the appetite. The seeds used to be carried by Roman soldiers on long marches, to chew when they did not have time to stop to cook a meal, and by devout Christians on fast days. This may possibly

be the action that [Culpeper](#) and other herbalists had in mind when they recommend the use of fennel by 'those that are grown fat'. It is a good diuretic, which may be welcomed by some obese people if water retention is part of their problem; but nobody should use diuretics without supervision, or for any length of time, as there is a risk of kidney damage if they are abused. It is also important to remember that fluid retention may be a sign of more serious illness and should be investigated.

As a diuretic and urinary tract antiseptic, Fennel has been used in the past for retention of urine, and urinary tract infections. It may have some value in the prevention of kidney stones. It is one of the most valuable oils for the treatment of cellulitis, when accumulations of toxic wastes and fluid in the subcutaneous fat produce a characteristic wrinkled appearance, often called 'orange peel skin'. It is often regarded as a cosmetic problem, though doctors in France have long recognised this as a medical condition, and treatment has been available through the French national health service for

several decades. The toxins build up over the thighs, hips and sometimes the abdomen, often in otherwise slim women (for this is an affliction that does not affect men - hormone balances seem to be involved). Fennel tea should be taken three times a day, combined with a radical reform of eating habits, and specialised massage to the affected area. It should be combined with other cleansing and detoxifying oils, such as Juniper, in massages and baths.

Fennel is one of the plants that has been known for thousands of years for its effects on the female reproductive system. It now seems probable that this is due to a plant hormone - a form of oestrogen - in its structure. It can help to regularise the menstrual cycle, particularly where periods are scanty and painful, with cramping pains. It has been found to reduce the symptoms of pre-menstrual stress, and also the water-retention which many women experience in the few days before menstruation is due. It is useful at the menopause in reducing the unpleasant symptoms caused by wildly fluctuating hormone levels, and it stimulates the production of oestrogen by the adrenal glands after the ovaries have stopped functioning. Oestrogen is needed by everyone, both men and women, to maintain muscle tone, elasticity of the skin and connective tissue, a healthy circulation and strong bones; so maintaining the supply can postpone some of the degenerative effects of aging.

Another hormonal effect of Fennel is to increase the flow of milk in nursing mothers. Minor uses include that of a gargle or mouthwash for gum infections, and Fennel is used for this reason in toothpaste and commercial mouthwashes.

CAUTIONS: Do not use Fennel for young children (under the age of 6) as one of its active principles (melanthine) can be toxic to them, though harmless to adults and older children in normal doses. Fennel must not be used by people with epilepsy.

