The peppermint mentha piperita history essay

Constituents: Volatile oil with menthol and esters, flavonoids, phenolic acids, triterpenes and a great many other constituents, some of them not as yet elucidated. (Barker: 387) Phytol, carotenoids, rosmarinic acid and tannins (McIntyre: 144)

Therapeutic actions: Antispasmodic, carminative, antemetic, stomachic, anticatarrhal, antiseptic and antipuritic (Barker: 387). Diaphoretic, analgesic, Nervine and circulatory stimulant (McIntyre: 144)

Traditional uses: Puritis –

Itching is one of the most common skin symptoms. Generalized pruritus occurs in 1-8% of pregnant women. It can create unpleasant feeling for these women especially at nights. Most pregnant women avoid using synthetic drugs because of their side effects. Peppermint is a plant which has been used as a traditional drug in Iran. It decreases skin's temperature. This study was done to determine the effects of peppermint oil on symptomatic treatment of pruritus in pregnant women attending to Rasoul Akram Hospital in Rasht, 2011. In accordance with the results of this study, it seems that peppermint oil can be effective in reducing the severity of Pruritus Gravidarum. More studies with larger sample sizes are required to confidently declare the mentioned results (Amjadi et al., 2012).

Antispasmodic:

An investigation of the mechanism of peppermint oil action was performed using isolated pharmacological preparations from guinea pig large intestine and patch clamp electrophysiology techniques on rabbit jejunum. It is

concluded that peppermint oil relaxes gastrointestinal smooth muscle by reducing calcium influx (Hills, 1991).

Used for windy digestion, nausea, cramps and irritable bowel, clinical research confirms the usefulness of peppermint essential oil in irritable bowel, by acting on the colon by relieving spasms and irritability (Chevallier: 2007)

Authors, Chevallier, Barker, Wren, Culpeper and Brown amongst others all agree on Mentha piperita being beneficial for the digestive system in varying ways. All agree it is antispasmodic which in my experience works extremely well especially when associated with Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Peppermint Oil has worked best in my situation but Peppermint Tea when taken before and after meals has also eased the pain associated with intestinal colic. Currently Peppermint Essential Oil is being used by a member of my family for pruritis caused by an allergy and is having good effects upon the itching, this is something I recently came across during a lecture on Herbal First Aid.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome presents with abdominal pain, feelings of distention, and “ variations in bowel habits”. Several in vitro (test tube) studies have demonstrated peppermint oil’s ability to relax smooth muscle via a blockade of the calcium channel transport system (Boon and Smith 2009).

According to De Vries, Mentha piperita soothes an irritated bowel and relaxes smooth muscles in the colon, these actions are due to the volatile oil (especially menthol) which is a carminative. (De Vries: 2001)

McKay and Blumberg state that although research has been carried out, both on humans and animals with peppermint oil, very little research has been carried out on peppermint tea. (McKay and Blumberg: 2006)

The name peppermint comes from Greek mythology apparently due to a love triangle. As in most Greek mythologies, there are many, many different versions of the story. One of the most popular states that Hades seduced the nymph, Minthe, and his wife, Persephone, who was enraged with jealousy then turned Minthe into a plant that people would constantly tread on.

Outraged by his wife’s interference, Hades imbued the plant with peppermint, so whenever the plant was crushed underneath the feet, it would release a wonderful aroma. Hades hoped that by doing this, people would remember Minthe and recall how beautiful and full of life she had been. Persephone was furious over her husband’s tampering, because Minthe’s presence would forever linger in the air as a constant reminder of her presence. In another version, Persephone turned Minthe into peppermint (other versions state mint) as a way to save her from Hades’s seduction.

Ancient Egyptians used peppermint. In fact, dried peppermint leaves were discovered in pyramids that carbon dated to 1, 000 BC.

The Romans grew mint and peppermint in their gardens for its medicinal purposes, especially as a digestive aid. They also used mint and peppermint as a ground cover, especially between stepping stone pathways. They enjoyed the pleasing aroma the plants produced that greeted guests as they entered a home or a courtyard.

Peppermint is a natural occurring hybrid of spearmint and water mint. The first recorded cultivation of peppermint was recorded in 1750 when a new hybrid was created and grown in London. The first commercial growing of peppermint in the United States began in 1790 in the state of Massachusetts. Peppermint has always been considered a medicinal cure for various ailments, mostly digestive; however there were many other uses prescribed for this special plant.

The Medicinal Value of Peppermint:

Bad breath, Flatulence, Headache (applied to temples), Heartburn, Hiccups, Indigestion and Nausea.

Over the centuries, peppermint has grown in popularity as more than just a digestive aid, although it’s still used for that purpose. A peppermint tea is a great way to ingest the herb. Other uses of peppermint include distilling the oil to produce flavouring. Peppermint flavouring is used in candies, medicines and hygienic products. Some of the products that peppermint is used in today are listed below:

Candy, Chewing gum, Cough syrup, Liqueur, Mouthwash, Ointment, Shampoo, Soap and Toothpaste.

Peppermint has some very important nutritional properties as well as medicinal ones,: Alpha-carotene, B vitamins, Beta-carotene, Calcium, Iron Magnesium, Manganese, Phosphorus, Potassium, Selenium, Vitamin E and Zinc.

1877: Colgate toothpaste with peppermint flavoring introduced

Late 1800s: Black Mitchum variety planted in Michigan and Indiana, transforming useless mucklands into productive agriculture lands

Early 1900s: Wrigley Chewing Gum and Peppermint hard candy, LifeSavers, introduced

1900s: Hiram G. Hotchkis (New York) and A. M. Todd (Michigan) became the Peppermint Kings

1950s: Verticillium Wilt nearly destroyed peppermint industry and prompted A. M. Todd Company to develop wilt-resistant variety

History of Peppermint – Origins & Historical Uses

(Mentha piperita, Linn.)

Earliest Recorded Uses of Peppermint.

Pliny (23-79 AD), Roman scientist and historian, recorded that the Greeks and Romans used peppermint to flavour sauces and their wines. Sprays of peppermint also adorned their tables.

Ancient Greek physicians used two different species of mint but some experts doubt that either was what we know as peppermint today. There is however, evidence that the Egyptians cultivated M. piperita. It’s also mentioned in thirteenth century Icelandic Pharmacopoeias. It wasn’t until the middle of the 18th century that peppermint was cultivated for its medicinal properties in Western Europe and England.

History of Peppermint in England.

Peppermint is thought to be a native English plant and possibly a hybrid between M. spicata and M. aquatica.

It was recorded by Ray (1627 – 1705) in 1696. John Ray is most well-known for his work Methodus Plantarum Nova in 1682 which was influential in the world of botany. In 1721, it was included in the London Pharmacopceia under a listing for M. piperitis sapore.

Peppermint has been grown commerically in England since 1750, primarily at Mitcham in Surrey. Apparently is is said that the essential peppermint oil produced from plants grown in this area are far superior to that from peppermint grown elsewhere. That said, growing peppermint is easily be achieved in just about every climate and location.

Historical Medicinal Uses of Peppermint Oil.

Oil of peppermint contains menthol which is an antiseptic and anesthetic. Chewing a few peppermint leaves is thought to relieve a toothache. Indigestion, cold and flu sufferers can find some relief by drinking peppermint tea. However, peppermint tea can cause insomnia and it is therefore best avoided at night.

Like many of the herbs we discuss, peppermint oil is useful in combating flatulence and mild indigestion. Many over-the-counter stomach aids contain peppermint to both enhance the taste as well as the effectiveness of the medicine.

THE BENEFITS OF THE USE OF PEPPERMINT IN HERBAL PREPARATIONS

HISTORY OF PEPPERMINT

PEPPERMINT

by Susie Ransom

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FAQ

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The value of mint has long been known to mankind. It has been said that the ancient Assyrians used it in their rituals to their fire god. The Greeks and Romans used mint not only to flavor their sauces and wines, but also for making crowns to rest on their noblemen's heads.

According to the Greek philosopher-scientist Theophrastus (300 BC) the botanical name Menthawas derived from Greek mythology. Mintho was a beautiful nymph who was loved by Pluto, the god of the underworld. Persephone, who had been abducted by Pluto to reign with him over his dominion, became very jealous of Mintho and changed her into a fragrant but lowly plant, the mint. (1)

Biblical mention of this herb states that mint was included among the valuable herbs with which they paid taxes. It is also speculated that mint was one of the bitter herbs that was served at The Last Supper.

The Jews of old would strew their synagogue floors with mint leaves so that their fragrance would scent the air with each footstep. The aromatic fumes that came forth were supposed to have a sort of sanitizing effect upon the crowded temple gatherings. This was accomplished by the scent penetrating the lungs and then the bloodstream, like an airborne antiseptic that would ward off disease. (2)

Mint has even been found in Egyptian tombs dating back to 1, 000 BC. They used this herb to flavor their food and wine. During the Middle Ages, besides a culinary use, powdered mint leaves were used to whiten their teeth.

Chinese medical writings made note of the use of mint since the Tang pen tsao period, which was around 659 AD. (3)

The mint that was written about in all these ancient writings is a forefather of our mint today. In terms of herbal history, peppermint is a fairly new addition to the mint family and herbal medicine.

Peppermint (Mentha piperita) is a natural, hybrid cross between watermint (Mentha aquatica)and spearmint (Mentha spicata) and was first described in 1696 by an English botanist whose name was John Ray (1628-1705). He discovered the pepper flavored mint growing in a field. Its medicinal properties were speedily recognized, and it was admitted into the London Pharmacopoceia in 1721. (4)

Because of the recognition of the importance of this aromatic herb for both culinary and medicinal uses, peppermint was cultivated for commercial purposes. The oldest existing peppermint district is in the neighborhood of Mitcham, in Surrey, where its cultivation from a commercial point of view dates from about 1750, at which period of time only a few acres of ground were devoted to medicinal plants.

One of the main reasons for growing peppermint commercially was to have enough quantity to extract the plant’s essential oil which was useful for so many purposes. This oil was in demand not only as a flavoring for cooking, but in flavoring personal care items as well.

The quality of English peppermint oil was superior to other areas of the world where the herb was grown at this time. It had been proven by experience

that all parts of the plant do not give the same proportion of oil, and it is more abundant when the plants have been grown in a hot region and have flowered to the best advantage.

At the end of the 18th century, more than 100 acres were growing peppermint. But as late as 1805 there were no stills at Mitcham, to distill the oil, and the herb had to be carried to London for the extraction of its precious oil. By 1850, there were already about 500 acres under cultivation at Mitcham. To this day, the English peppermint plantations are still chiefly located in this district. (5)

The United States, however, is now the most important producer of peppermint oil. Its cultivation was introduced in 1855 to Indiana, Michigan, New York, and Ohio. Thousands of acres were planted with this herb. As of today, this plant grows from Canada to Florida and everywhere in between. The largest areas of cultivation for the oil is principally done in Indiana, Michigan, Oregon, Washington, and California, with Washington ranking number one in production of the oil. (6)

(1) Kirschmann, John. Nutrition Almanac Fourth Edition p. 354

(2) Dubin, Reese. Miracle Food Cures from the Bible p. 9

(3) herbs2000 www. herbs2000. com Peppermint p. 2

(4) Grieve, M. Mrs. A Modern Herbal Vol. II p. 537

(5) Grieve, M. Mrs. A Modern Herbal Vol. II p. 537

(6) Wikipedia, www. en. wikipedia. org Peppermint p. 2

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