

Bacopa Monnieri

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Bacopa monnieri (Latin name) has about half a page of different common names one of which is Bacopa. This plant is considered a native plant of India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, China, Pakistan, Taiwan, Vietnam and Florida. It also grows in Hawaii and the southern states but it is considered a tropical plant. It is also listed among Dr. James Duke's "Medicinal Plants of Latin America".

The leaves and stem of the plant are used. The leaves are succulent and arranged oppositely on the stem. The flowers are small and white having 4 to 5 petals. This plant has the ability to grow in water, it can be found in bogs and ponds. It is also a beautiful specimen in aquariums.



It has been used in salads, soups and can be cooked or pickled. It has also been used in traditional herbal preparations as a powdered herb and in tinctures, with the tincture having more sedative effects.

Bacopa has been used in Ayurvedic medicine and has long held the title of "anti-aging, and memory herb." It is also used as a remedy for stress and epilepsy. The medicinal qualities include those of: adaptogen, (helps the body adapt to change and stressful situations), analgesic, anti-cancer, antidepressant, anticonvulsant, anti-edemic, antioxidant, antispasmodic, anti-ulcer, anti-stress, anti-tumor, anti-paralytic, nerve, rubefacient and bactericide. It even helps lower blood pressure. This tiny plant has a myriad of benefits.

One study showed that Bacopa lowered A Beta amyloid cerebral plaque in mice by 60 percent. A protein fragment called beta-amyloid starts to destroy brain synapses and then clumps into plaque that causes nerve cell death. This shows promise not only in memory improvement but promise with Alzheimer's healing.

Using Bacopa as a whole food would definitely have therapeutic effects on the body. So if you are feeling a loss for words or just can't remember what you were going to say maybe Bacopa is what you should remember!

Yvonne Salcido is a Master Herbalist.