

Hawthorn Berry

The botanical name for Hawthorn Berry is *Crataegus laevigata* - American Hawthorn and *Crataegus oxycanthus* - the English Hawthorn. Hawthorn is also known by, Haw, White Thorn, May Day Flower and May Blossom. The genus name, "Crataegus" comes from the Greek word, "Kratos", meaning hardness, strength or power. The berries of the Hawthorn are collected in the fall after they turn a dark purple. Hawthorn berries are high in vitamins B1, B2, C, calcium, iron and phosphorus.



The parts of the Hawthorn bush that are used for medicinal purposes are the berries and the leaf. Hawthorn berries are one of the oldest known medicinal plants used in European herbal medicine. Dioscorides, a Greek herbalist, was the first to report the performance of Hawthorn Berry on the heart. Dioscorides was followed by a Swiss physician, Paracelsus who touted the use of Hawthorn Berry for its actions on the heart.

During his years of practice, Dr. Green of Ennis, Ireland held such a reputation of curing heart disease and other ailments of the heart, that he had patients from all over the United Kingdom. While remaining a physician in good standing, he refused to share his secret with his colleagues. After his death in 1894, Dr. Green's daughter revealed that a concentrate of fresh Hawthorn berries, *Crataegus Oxycantha*, Common Hawthorn, was the formula which her father had successfully used to cure his many heart patients.

Hawthorn Berry has successfully been used in other countries as a cardiac tonic to feed and give strength to the heart. Hawthorn Berry increases the body's ability to utilize oxygen and the heart's ability to utilize calcium. It helps regulate high and low blood pressure, and breaks down fat deposits and cholesterol in the body. Hawthorn has been proven to reduce calcification of arterial plaque, which hardens and narrows the arteries leading to the heart.

In studies, Hawthorn Berries have proven to work equally as well as Captopril, a prescription drug, in the treatment of Stage 2 heart disease. The wonderful aspect of Hawthorn Berries was the added benefit of lowering blood pressure, lower heart rates while exercising, improved stamina and endurance while exercising, pumped more blood at lower pressure, had less fatigue, and less shortness of breath. When compared with NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory

drugs), patients had an increase of blood pressure, whereas the Hawthorn Berry reduced blood pressure.

Because of Hawthorn Berry's anti-inflammatory properties it has been used to reduce ulcerative colitis, also known as inflammatory bowel disease.

When used for weight loss, it aids in digestion and helps reduce water retention by expelling excess salt from the body. Hawthorn is also high in pectin and therefore is soothing to the throat and respiratory tract. Hawthorn Berry is known to reduce nervous tension and alleviate insomnia.

Dr. John R. Christopher formulated Hawthorn Berry Heart Syrup and called it, "heart food." When used in conjunction with the Mucusless Diet, he suggested that when used over a period of time, these would, "rebuild the heart to a good, strong condition." Dr. Christopher also suggested and used the Hawthorn Berry Syrup to treat "leakage of the heart, lesions left by former heart attacks, dropsy, hypertrophy and other functional and congenital heart disorders. He said that it would even heal broken hearts."

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