

# HAWTHORN - Crataegus Monogyna, Rosaceae family

**Common names:** Quickthorn, Thornapple, Maytree, Whitehorn, and Hawberry.

**Parts used:** Leaves, flowers, berries.

**Constituents:** Flavonoids, oligomeric procyanidins, triterpene acids, phenolic acids.

**Taste/Energetics:** Warming, drying, sweet, sour, astringent, bitter.

**Actions:** Hypotensive, circulatory adaptogen, cardiac tonic, cardioprotective, vasodilator, antioxidant, astringent.

**Contraindications:** Not suitable if you are pregnant or chest feeding.

**Drug interaction:** Not to be used in conjunction with heart medication.

**Dosage:** 1.5–3.5g of dried flower, leaf or berry per day, as infusion or decoction. 20-40ml tincture per week.

## Botany

Common plant in the British isles and northern temperate regions. Mature trees can reach a height of 15m. The bark is brown-grey, knotted and fissured, and twigs are slender and brown and covered in thorns. Often a hedgerow plant as it's long living, hardy and thorny. First leaves - traditionally referred to as 'bread and cheese' as they used to be a highly favoured green. Flowers - White and pink flowers that come out in May, controversial wee like smell but a beautiful signal that spring is on its way. Red berries - September, October and November.

## Folklore

In folklore, the hawthorn tree holds a powerful and often mysterious significance. Traditionally associated with protection, fertility, and the boundary between worlds, it is especially prominent in Celtic and English mythology. The hawthorn was believed to be a sacred tree inhabited by fairies, and disturbing or cutting it down was said to bring bad luck or even supernatural retribution. In Ireland, lone hawthorn trees- often called "fairy trees"- were left undisturbed in fields, even during construction projects, out of deep respect and fear. The tree also symbolised spring and renewal, as its blossoms- known as mayflowers- bloom in May.

## Circulatory system

Hawthorn is a leading herbal remedy for cardiovascular health. Hawthorn normalizes cardiovascular function. It strengthens the heart, regulates arterial blood flow and rhythm, and is used for coronary insufficiency, palpitations, arrhythmias, angina, and degenerative heart disease. It reduces inflammation in the vessels and helps prevent the formation of clots and heart attacks. It lowers harmful cholesterol and reduces plaque deposits in the arteries. Acts as a peripheral vasodilator for poor circulation, Raynaud's, Buerger's disease, intermittent claudication, and varicose veins. May help with anemia and altitude sickness.

## Nervous system

Hawthorn flower essence supports the emotional heart by encouraging self-love, healing heartache, and aiding in the process of grief. It can relieve anxiety, stress, and sleeplessness - especially when linked to heart symptoms such as palpitations. It is also recommended for neurodivergencies such as ADD and ADHD, and can help build and support emotional resilience.

### **Reproductive system**

Hawthorn helps regulate blood flow and can treat amenorrhea. It supports libido and fertility and is recommended for threatened miscarriage. During menopause, it may ease night sweats and aid in managing obesity.

## **Hawthorn Sriracha**

140g Hawthorn berries

560ml water

400g red chillies

14g garlic

60g honey

17g salt

100ml vinegar

Add berries and water in a pan, bring to the boil then sieve making sure to get as much pulp off the seeds as you can.

Once cooled, blend with everything apart from the vinegar.

Put in a sterilised mason jar, in a warm place for 5 days, burp each day.

Blend mix with vinegar and sieve.

Optional - Reduce down for a thicker sauce.

Recipe from the Forager chef.

### **References**

The Phytotherapy Desk Reference, Michael Thomsen

The Complete Herbal Tutor, Anne McIntyre

<https://www.herbalreality.com/herb/hawthorn/>

<https://www.eatweeds.co.uk/hawthorn-crataegus-monogyna>