

ROSE - Rosaceae family

Common names: Damascus rose, dog rose and wild rose.

Native to Asia, Europe, North America, Northwest Africa.

Parts used: Flowers, top leaf, hips.

Constituents: Flavonoids, triterpenes, tannins, phenolic acids, polysaccharides, fatty acids, organic acids, carotenes, vitamins C and E.

Taste/Energetics: Cooling, drying, sweet, sour.

Actions: Astringent, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, sedative, anxiolytic.

Contraindications: It may reduce the absorption of iron. Avoid in pregnancy.

Drug interaction: None known.

Dosage: 1–10g/day or 5–15ml of a 1:2 in 50% fresh tincture. Drink rosewater freely (5–50ml/day).

Botany

Rosa damascena and *Rosa Galica* are the varieties typically cultivated for medicinal purposes. *Rosa canina* and *Rosa rubiginosa* are typically used for hips. Five-petaled flowers with multiple stamens give it a bushy look. Compound leaves with 5 to 7 leaflets. Tough stems. Found in hedgerows and climbing walls. Hips are oval or round capsules that turn red once ripe. Seeds within contain irritating hairs that need to be removed before use.

Reproductive system

Rose helps balance hormones, regulate menstrual cycles, and alleviate premenstrual tension and menopausal irritability. It is used for excessive menstrual bleeding, vaginal infections, and inflammation, as well as conditions like dysmenorrhoea, metrorrhagia, endometriosis, and fibroids. Rose also relieves PMS symptoms such as irritability and emotional sensitivity, enhances libido and fertility, and clears heat from the uterus and blood. Rose relieves uterine congestion, heavy and irregular periods, and is antispasmodic for menstrual cramps and PMS. Rosewater cools and relieves menopausal hot flushes, while rose's calming and aphrodisiac effects support emotional balance and heart health. It also eases night sweats and mood swings in menopause.

Skin

Rose essential oil and rosewater soothe sunburn, insect bites, and irritated skin with their cooling and anti-inflammatory properties. The flowers and upper leaves gently tighten tissues and calm inflammation, while compounds like nerol, geraniol, and citronellol provide antimicrobial protection. Roses are commonly used for inflammatory skin conditions, including eczema, psoriasis, urticaria, and itching. Rosewater excels at calming and cleansing irritated skin, reducing redness and swelling from acne, boils, abscesses, sore eyes, minor wounds, bruises, and sprains.

Nervous system

Roses calm and uplift anxious minds, offering comfort in times of grief. Their flavonoids have antidepressant properties, making rose especially helpful for nervous depression and anxiety marked by agitation, palpitations, and tension headaches. Restorative and soothing, roses are used for insomnia, depression, irritability, anger, and both mental and physical fatigue.

Digestive system

Roses fight infection, restore gut flora, and ease digestive issues. Their astringent tannins reduce stomach acidity and calm overactivity, helping with excess hunger, thirst, and mouth ulcers. Roses are useful for diarrhea, enteritis, dysentery, stomach cramps, constipation, nausea, and indigestion. Rose hip syrup is especially soothing for these complaints.

Immunity

Rose stimulates the action of the mucociliary escalator and helps to prevent chest infections and bronchial congestion. Antimicrobial and decongestant, they help to prevent and relieve colds, flu, sore throats, catarrh, coughs, and bronchitis. Rose hips are a potent source of vitamin C and other nutrients (A, B, K), traditionally used in syrups to boost immunity during colds and flu. The cooling action of rose leaves and flowers also helps lower fevers.

Arthritis

Roses possess antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties, which help fight infections, clear toxins, and ease pain, especially in cases of osteoarthritis. Flavonoids found in the hips are powerful anti-inflammatory agents, and when combined with vitamin C, can aid in collagen formation and help alleviate arthritic conditions.

Hips and Haw Ketchup

300g rosehips
200g hawthorns
100ml water
300ml apple cider vinegar
1 medium onion, diced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 teaspoon allspice powder
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon sea salt
100g dark brown sugar

Place all the ingredients except for the brown sugar in a pan, cover with a tight-fitting lid, bring to the boil and simmer gently for 15–20 minutes, until the fruits have softened.

Pour the mixture into a sieve, set over a bowl, and rub the flesh of the fruit through with a wooden spoon, discarding the pips and skins. Line another sieve with muslin, and set over a pan, pass the pulp through once again to remove any rosehip hairs.

Add the sugar to the pan and simmer gently for a further 5–10 minutes, stirring constantly. Pour the hot mixture into sterilized jars or bottles, seal and allow to cool.

SHELF LIFE Store in the fridge unopened for up to 1 year. Once opened, use within 1 month.

Recipe from the Handmade Apothecary.

References:

The Complete Herbal Tutor, Anne McIntyre
<https://www.herbalreality.com/herb/rose>