

# The Health Benefits of Hawthorne Berry

Hawthorn berry is a grouping of tree plants in the rose family that is native to the temperate regions of Europe, Middle East, Asia, and North America. Parts of the Middle East consider the plant sacred. Many historians believe it may have been the Crown of Thorns worn by Jesus during the Crucifixion. This medicinal herb is known to be one of the greatest natural agents for improving cardiovascular function.

Hawthorn is endorsed as a cardiovascular aid by Commission E- an important branch of the German government that studies and approves natural therapies. It is widely used in Europe to improve the circulatory system, treat angina, high blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmia, and congestive heart failure. It is renowned for its ability to strengthen the heart and blood vessels and restore healthy muscular tone to the heart wall.

## Powerful Anti-Oxidant Nutrients

Hawthorn berry is loaded with a wide array of powerful anti-oxidant nutrients. Anti-oxidants neutralize free radicals and reduce oxidative stress and tissue damage in the body. The unique blend of anti-oxidants found in hawthorn come from a group of phytonutrients. These include tannins, flavonoids, proanthocyanidins, and phenolic acids. The standardization of hawthorn products is based on the overall content of flavonoids (2.2%) and proanthocyanidins (18.75%).

Hawthorn has been well studied in individuals with congestive heart failure. Five of the six major studies performed found dramatically improved symptoms (such as shortness of breath and fatigue). One study showed that hawthorn (taken at 900mg/day) for 2 months was as effective as low doses of

captopril (leading heart medication) in improving common symptoms associated with congestive heart failure.

## **Unique Anti-Oxidant Blend**

The unique anti-oxidant blend within Hawthorn creates a powerful vasodilating effect. It acts to improve blood vessel endothelial function to where the vessel is able to open with less resistance. This allows greater blood flow in working tissues and improves oxygen utilization. This is primarily due to the flavonoids rutin and vitexin along with the proanthocyanins.

Hawthorn improves heart cell metabolism and enhances the flow of electrolytes across the cardiac cells. This prevents or corrects heart rhythm abnormalities and strongly encourages a healthy cardiac rhythm.

## **Hawthorne Improves Cardiovascular Function**

Hawthorne contains flavones that enhance the function of certain cardiac enzymes. This effect increases the heart's contractile force, which effectively boosts stroke volume while increasing the heart's tolerance to hypoxic conditions. It also improves the heart's ability to create energy through anaerobic metabolism which improves the heart's ability to withstand stress.

Hawthorn also acts to inhibit angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE). Elevated ACE causes an increase in angiotensin II and systemic vasoconstriction. This process elevates blood pressure. By modulating ACE levels, hawthorn helps to normalize blood pressure and reduce stress on the cardiovascular system. The body usually takes two to four weeks to adapt to the hawthorn and have lasting effects on blood pressure.

# Improves Tissue Collagen

Hawthorn also helps protect joints with its unique blend of antioxidants. These phytonutrients fend off specific classes of free radicals that are known to damage tissue collagen resulting in arthritic conditions. Natural remedies that support healthy collagen improve the health of joints, skin, hair, and nails.

When getting hawthorn, be sure to get the whole plant – leaves, flowers, and berry. The berries contain more proanthocyanins while the flowers and leaves contain more vitexin. The most effective way to consume hawthorn, if you are unable to get it fresh, is in a dried and ground form.

Put the fresh plant or dried form into shakes or teas and consume daily. Due to its antioxidant and cardiovascular boosting effects it is great to use pre/post exercise. This improves exercise recovery by improving oxygen flow and neutralizes scavenging free radicals from damaged tissues.

## Sources For This Article Include:

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