

Saw Palmetto

Serenoa repens (W. Bartram) Small
[Fam. *Areaceae*]

OVERVIEW

Saw palmetto berries were first used by Native Americans as a diuretic and sexual tonic, as well as for stomachache and dysentery. Since the mid-1990s, saw palmetto has been one of the 10 top-selling herbs in the U.S. Total sales in mainstream retail stores in 2000 were over \$43 million, ranking saw palmetto sixth in herb sales.

USES

Mild to moderate benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH); enlarged prostate, Stages I and II.

DOSAGE

4–6 weeks are needed for effectiveness.

CRUDE BERRIES: 10 g, twice daily.

FLUID EXTRACT: 1–2 ml, twice daily [1:1 (*g/ml*)]; 2–4 ml, twice daily [1:2 (*g/ml*)].

SOFT NATIVE EXTRACT: 160 mg, twice daily or 320 mg once daily [10:1–14:1 (*w/w*), contains approximately 85–95% fatty acids].

DRY NORMALIZED EXTRACT: 400 mg, twice daily [4:1 (*w/w*) contains ca. 25% fatty acids].

NOTE: Most clinical studies have been conducted with the native extract standardized to approx. 85–95% fatty acids.

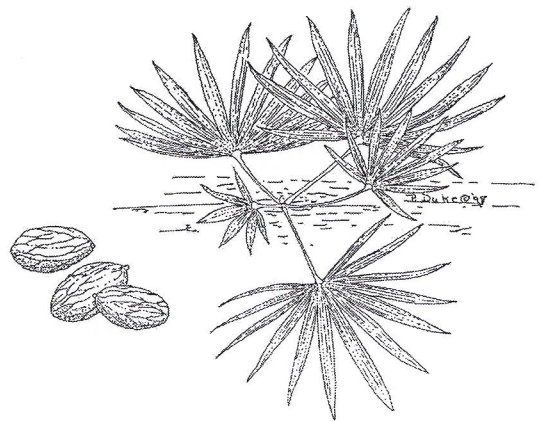
CONTRAINDICATIONS

Saw palmetto should not be used by individuals with advanced BPH and severe urinary retention without first consulting with a healthcare provider to rule out prostate cancer.

PREGNANCY AND LACTATION: Due to potential hormonal activity, saw palmetto is not recommended for pregnant or breast-feeding women, although the herb is seldom used by women.

Comments

When using a dietary supplement, purchase it from a reliable source. For best results, use the same brand of product throughout the period of use. As with all medications and dietary supplements, please inform your healthcare provider of all herbs and medications you are taking. Interactions may occur between medications and herbs or even among different herbs when taken at the same time. Treat your herbal supplement with care by taking it as directed, storing it as advised on the label, and keeping it out of the reach of children and pets. Consult your healthcare provider with any questions.



ADVERSE EFFECTS

Gastrointestinal disturbance occurs rarely. Ingesting large amounts of saw palmetto berries may cause diarrhea while ingesting saw palmetto on an empty stomach may cause nausea. High blood pressure occurred in only 3% of patients who took saw palmetto extract in a large clinical trial of 951 men although this effect is not normally associated with the use of saw palmetto. Compared to finasteride, the leading prescription drug for BPH, saw palmetto extracts have a better general safety profile and produce less frequent sexual complaints. Saw palmetto has not been associated with erectile dysfunction, ejaculatory disturbance, or altered libido, as can occur with some men using prescription medications for BPH.

DRUG INTERACTIONS

There are no known interactions between saw palmetto and conventional drugs.



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