

An Overview of Genus Hibiscus Medicinal Uses

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EDITORIAL

Hibiscus belonging to the Malvaceae family is widely grown in many countries. Some species, such as *Hibiscus cannabinus* L., *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* and *Hibiscus sabdariffa* L., are important sources of commercial fiber, whereas some species are useful as food, and yet others are medicinal. There were few other species like *H. tiliaceous*, *H. microanthus*, *H. asper*, *H. acetosella* which highlights the medicinal potential of the plant Hibiscus due to its unique blend of phytochemicals. Many Hibiscus species are valued as ornamental plants and are cultivated in gardens. In Ayurveda, *Hibiscus esculentus* L. fruits are considered tonic, astringent, and aphrodisiac. The bioactive compounds in the crude extracts of the plants make it suitable for various medicinal properties like anti-proliferative, anti-diabetic, anti-inflammatory, anti-obesity, nephroprotective, anti-ulcer, hepatoprotective, hypersensitive, hypolipidemic and many more.

This plant is often used in the traditional medicine being rich in phytoconstituents like flavonoids, tannins, saponins, carbohydrates, steroids, phenols, glycosides, quinones, terpenoids etc. thus having enormous prospective in modern therapeutic uses. The extraction of such economical phytochemicals has been done from various plant parts such as leaves, stem, flower and roots using different solvents viz. water, methanol, ethanol, ethylacetate, chloroform and petroleum ether for extract preparation.

In vitro studies show *Hibiscus sabdariffa* L., an ingredient found in many herbal tea blends and other beverages, has antioxidant properties, and, in animal models, extracts of its calyces have demonstrated

hypcholesterolemic and antihypertensive properties. People use hibiscus for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, to increase the production of breast milk, and many other conditions, but there is no good scientific evidence to support most of these uses. In early research demonstrations that drinking hibiscus tea for 2-6 weeks decreases blood pressure by a small amount in people with normal or high blood pressure. One of the most common ingredients found in commercial herbal tea blends sold in the US is *Hibiscus sabdariffa*. Compared with black tea (*C. sinensis*) and have an effect similar to common hypotensive drugs.

Various skin health benefits of hibiscus leaves it has anti-inflammatory properties as well, which help in curing acne. Hibiscus has anti-ageing properties which help to slow down skin ageing process. It also aids hair growth from dormant hair follicles helping cover bald patches, and also combats dryness and dandruff. Increase in hair follicle length was observed *in-vitro*. Although flower extract showed poorer results, this difference was insignificant.

The treatment of Hibiscus flowers ethanolic extract, which contained polyphenols, tannins, carboxylic acids, triterpenoids, and alkaloids, demonstrated wound healing activity.

All of its parts have been used in the treatment of fever, inflammation, bacterial infections, and even as contraceptive agent. Flavonoids, tannins, terpenoids, saponins, and alkaloids are the main phytochemicals as they are present in different extracts, and are more likely responsible for their biological activities. Lower toxicity of this plant can be an advantage to qualify it to be used as new therapeutic agent.

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