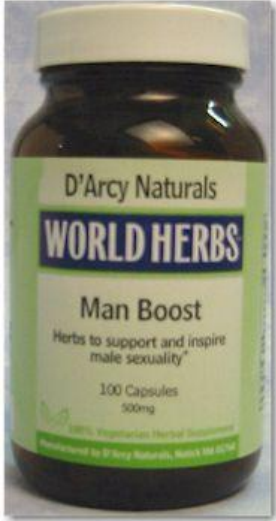


## Herbal Aphrodisiacs

By Geoffrey R. D'Arcy, Lic. Ac., D.O.M.

Over many thousands of years all of the herbal traditions of the world have sought out plants to support sexuality. Ginseng, epimedium, polygonum from the East; damiana from the ancient Mayans; muira puama from Brazilian folk medicine. Modern research from Germany in the 1980's added ginkgo biloba to the list, and the research continues. Science has been able to validate most of the ancient claims, and there remain many compounds of these plants, and more, yet to be discovered.



### Man Boost Formula

This formula combines the most effective herbs from around the world. Combining the wisdom of these traditions into one herbal formula literally puts thousands of years of experience from all over the world into each bottle. The Man Boost formula has harnessed the pure power of natural medicine and created a powerful herbal formula for men, free of endangered species or strange animal parts, and processed and manufactured in the United States with the highest quality standards. Power herbs of the East combined with herbs and technology of the West give you a man's formula that is balanced, effective, safe and without side effects.

Natural substances can affect bodily levels of male and female sex hormones (androgens and estrogens), increase brain levels of neurotransmitters associated with sexual desire, and increase blood supply to erectile tissue. Natural plant medicines can nourish and support the sex glands as well as tone the entire hormonal and reproductive systems, increasing sexual vigor and often fertility. Sexual desire is a complex human function affected by psychological and physical factors. For peak levels of sexual functioning one needs to support those things that stimulate sexual functioning, and avoid substances and factors that decrease or suppress sexual performance.

### **Plants that stimulate sexual functioning: Damiana (*Turnera diffusa*—aphrodisiaca)**

As its Latin name suggests, damiana has a reputation as an erotic aid, dating back to ancient Mayan times. It is also considered an effective antidepressant, urinary antiseptic, tonic for the central nervous system, prostate gland and endocrine system. The plant contains some alkaloids that boost circulation, stimulate nerves and increase the sensitivity of the clitoris and penis. Damiana has not attracted the attention of researchers, yet it is rich in anecdotal evidence mainly from Mayans to modern Mexicans, and is a much safer and milder alternative to Yohimbe.<sup>1</sup> Damiana contains beta sitosterol and various aromatic oils that could have some stimulant effect on the sexual apparatus or could build sexual health and reproductivity.<sup>2</sup>

### **Muira Puama (Potency wood)**

Its common name emphasizes its reputation. Derived from two Brazilian shrubs, the peoples of the Amazon and Orinolo basins use this substance to enhance sex, stimulate or tonify nerves, and treat impotence. Discovered by explorers and brought back to Europe, it is now part of the British Herbal Pharmacopoeia.<sup>3 4 5</sup> Again, this plant is a safe alternative to Yohimbe. Recent research at the Institute of Sexology in Paris looked at 262 patients with erection problems and experiencing a lack of sexual desire; over half, who were given the herb over a two-week period, experienced benefits to their sexual functioning. Researchers are still unsure about why Muira Puama works. Among its constituents is a resin that may stimulate the central nervous system as well as inpeol, compestrol and beta-sitosterol.<sup>6 7 8</sup>



## Ginkgo (Ginkgo Biloba)

Standardized to 24% Ginkgo flavonoids.

The Ginkgo tree in China has survived for some 200 million years and has a life expectancy of some 2,000–4,000 years. Often called "the living fossil", it is the sole remaining species of ginkgo that once flourished in and predates the Ice Age. Is it any wonder that any tree with such a remarkable history and longevity possesses a unique life-force and biochemistry for longevity? Research began on the leaves in 1970 and intensifies up to this day.

Widely used in Germany, over 5.24 million prescriptions were given in 1988 for peripheral arterial disease, cerebral-vascular diseases and other diseases related to the need for improved blood flow to the brain.<sup>9</sup> Ginkgo also boosts blood flow to the penis. In one study, 50 men with erection impairment caused by poor penile blood flow were given standardized ginkgo extracts to 24% ginkgo flavonoids daily for six months; 78% regained erections including all those who had previously been helped by impotency drugs.<sup>10</sup> In another study, men who did not respond to injection of an erection boosting drug, papaverine, help regained potency within 6 months.<sup>11</sup> Ginkgo improves circulation without increasing blood pressure.<sup>12</sup>

## Eastern Herbs

Chinese herbal formulas to boost sexual drive are often described by the Chinese in terms of their ability to correct "deficient qi" or a "lack of yang," or in Western terms, lack of virile or vital energy. From the Chinese perspective, sexual tonics also attempt to strengthen the internal organs necessary to support normal sexual activity. Herbs have their own specific natural affinities for certain organs and glands in the body. In the case of aphrodisiacs, they are selected with known affinities for the sexual organs, blood and vital glands, especially the all-important suprarenal glands. The herbs tonify these tissues, stimulate secretions from glands, and promote circulation to the minute capillaries of the sexual organs. The result is overall stimulation of the body vitality (energy) and hormones (essence); the enhanced sexual potency that follows is largely a result of the general tonification of essence and energy. Herbs that strengthen "yang" or root energy of the body enter the kidney organ and strengthen "life force" at a foundational level, producing a sense of well-being and energize the entire system.

## Siberian Ginseng (Eleutherooccus senticosus)

This shrubby member of the Ginseng family has been used for thousands of years by the Chinese to balance vital energy, yet it was Russian researchers who catapulted this plant to fame. Now deep-sea divers, miners, mountain rescuers, workers, soldiers, cosmonauts, and athletes use this plant as a general energy tonic, or adaptogen, helping users to perform better under stress.<sup>13 14 15 16 17 18</sup>

## Ginseng (Panax ginseng)

Long used as an aphrodisiac in the East to increase general vitality and revitalize the sex organs. Modern studies (there are over 800 on ginseng's general properties), especially in the American Journal of Clinical Medicine have shown ginseng treated animals are more sexually active than animals not given ginseng. They also show an increase in sperm quality or quantity in males. This tonic brings the body into balance. In terms of sexual performance, this adaptogen can be expected to help relieve stress, high blood pressure, depression, and exhaustion. Chinese medicine explains ginseng's impact by its working on organs to raise their "life force". In particular, it works to strengthen the heart and to enhance the functioning of the kidneys (kidneys being a broad term that includes the reproductive, and hormonal system, as an aid to restore yang).<sup>19 20 21 22 23</sup>

## Eucommia Bark (du zhong)

Derived from a hardy, rubber producing tree, this is one of the earliest Chinese herbs, traditionally used as a system strengthener that invigorate the liver and kidney, strengthens bones and muscles, and enhances vital essence and vital energy. Eucommia is often used by Chinese herbalists to treat impotence and general sexual



dysfunctions. On the psycho-emotional level it is believed to stimulate will power.

### **Epimedium (Horny goat weed)**

An obscure Chinese herb, also known as “lewd sheep grass”, noticed by sheep breeders to stimulate their sheep to better mating performance, it is also said to make goats fornicate after they eat it. Studies have shown that it increases sperm count and semen density. It stimulates hormone production in the supra-adrenal glands that in turn stimulates other glands and has a salutary effect on the circulation of blood by causing blood vessels to dilate, thereby greatly enhancing circulation in tissues fed by small capillaries, such as a man's penis.

### **Fo-ti (He Shou Wu) (Polygonum multiflorum)**

The myth: during the Tang dynasty lived a man named He Shou Wu who at the age of 58 started to take this tonic herb daily, and over the course of ten years fathered many children and his hair never turned gray. He died at the age of 130. Fo-ti is famous as a rejuvenating and longevity tonic in China where it is taken to prevent premature aging. It is also said to increase fertility, strengthen sexual function and boost a low libido. On the psycho-emotional level many believe this herb helps make people “more comfortable with the yang force of arousal” helping to overcome historical patterns of inhibition and trauma.

### **Factors that decrease sexual functioning:**

Even minor health problems can sap your energy, thereby decreasing interest in sex. Indeed, all men occasionally have performance problems. Also, an enlarged prostate, or benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), common in men over 40, often interferes with sexual functioning. Arterial insufficiency poses one of the greatest risks to sexual longevity. Simply put, if blood can't flow properly through a man's veins and arteries, it will not be available in sufficient quantities for an erection. Researchers have found four arterial risk factors among men who have had varying degrees of erectile impairment.

### **Smoking**

A major British study showed 64% of the men who had erectile impairment were smokers.

### **High blood pressure**

All the hypertensive men in the same study had erectile impairment. Most high blood pressure medication can interfere with sexual functioning.

### **Elevated cholesterol**

Cholesterol causes the formation of arterial plaque in vessels leading not only to the heart but to sexual organs as well.

### **Diabetes**

Damage to the peripheral nerves can impair erections.

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol interferes with erection in men when more than two beers, cocktails or glasses of wine are consumed in an hour.

### **Antidepressants**

The current most popular antidepressants, (the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, SSRI's): Prozac, Zoloft, and Paxil, cause problems in more than half of those who use them creating a loss of desire, impaired erections in men and difficulty in reaching orgasm.



## Other legal drugs

An enormous number of prescription and over-the-counter medications can cause sexual impairment. This includes antihistamines taken for allergies and all drugs that carry a label saying, "may cause drowsiness."

## Illicit drugs

Narcotics and tranquilizers depress sexual functioning; stimulants also can impair orgasm and with regular use can inhibit desire. Marijuana can cause unpredictable results sometimes making people withdraw or become anxious or irritable.

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