

BUCHU

(*Agathosma betulina*)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Diuretic
- Antioxidant
- Anti-inflammatory
- Analgesic
- Antibacterial
- Mild laxative
- Carminative
- Diaphoretic

Indications

- Urinary tract infections (specifically acidic urine) including cystitis, urethritis, prostatitis and pyelonephritis.
- Benign prostatic hyperplasia
- Hypertension
- Fever, cough, common cold
- Dyspepsia, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome
- Gout
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Topically as an insect repellent, deodorant, to treat or prevent bacterial and fungal skin infections.

Traditional and Empirical Use

The traditional use of buchu encompasses the treatment of kidney and urinary tract infections, cold, stomach ailments, rheumatism, gout and fever.

Energetics

Bitter, pungent, warm, dry

Constituents

Volatile oils, flavonoids, B vitamins, tannins, resin and mucilage

Use in Pregnancy

Caution is advised. Buchu is generally regarded as having a high level of safety but is often

contraindicated during pregnancy. This is mainly for the adulterant *A. crenulata* as the contraindicated chemical pulegone (in the essential oil) is contained in high amounts in this species. *A. betulina*, however, is considered safe to use during pregnancy.

Contraindications and Cautions

Buchu may have antiplatelet effects therefore, theoretically, buchu may increase the risk of bleeding when used by patients with bleeding disorders. Tell patients to discontinue buchu at least two weeks before elective surgical procedures.

May cause mild gastrointestinal discomfort if taken on an empty stomach.

Caution advised during use with a kidney infection as the volatile oil may irritate the kidney.

Drug Interactions

Theoretically, buchu may have antiplatelet effects which may enhance the effects of anticoagulant or antiplatelet drugs and increase the risk of bleeding in some patients. Caution is advised with anticoagulant or antiplatelet drugs.

Buchu contains pulegone, a known hepatotoxin. There is some concern that buchu may adversely affect the liver, especially when the leaf is used in large doses or the oil is ingested. Theoretically, concomitant use with hepatotoxic drugs might increase the risk of liver damage. Caution is advised with these drugs.

Buchu is thought to have diuretic properties. Theoretically, buchu might reduce excretion and increase levels of lithium. Caution is advised and the dose of lithium might need to be decreased.

Administration and Dosage

1:2 liquid extract in 60% alcohol
15 to 30mL weekly