

Hawthorn (Crataegus)

-deserving of a new look-

A deeper understanding of the extreme personal and cultural importance of this plant can be achieved by starting with a study of its actual natural growth and morphology rather than concentrating to begin with on its ingredients.

To state it ahead of time, the entire “gesture” of Hawthorn is one of overcoming heaviness and concentrating all its life forces into a tremendous vegetative growing power.

The plant brings out its leaves early in the spring, ahead of other vegetation (sign of strong etheric forces); the leaves are wide and in general threefold lobulated (again the “wide” leaves are a sign of strong etheric forces that, however, allow the astral, air, organization to penetrate into the plant and cause the slight division in the leaves); the stem is strong, very hard, and many of its branches end by becoming very sharp thorns (sign that the etheric forces are consolidated on the inside, as opposed to allowing the bush to fully unfold as a tree; to phrase it differently hawthorn is a tree that has given up its “ambition” to grow fully and has restricted itself to stay as a mighty bush. This is different from an inability to reach a tree stage and “remaining” a bush); the fruits have an unpleasant smell and a pasty taste (again a sign that the plant is holding its forces inside instead of spreading an aroma into the wider spaces around it; the unpleasant fishy smell comes from a protein degradation process which becomes later an ability to resist protein decay); the bush can grow in very shady, even dark spaces, like the forest (sign that it has intrinsically stored enough “Sun light” so that it can tolerate the absence of the physical Sun).



All these observations indeed support the conclusion that Hawthorn is truly capable of lifting its heavy material above ground and letting it come to fruition in its characteristic red fruits. (To better understand this train of thought please view a webinar on hawthorn, the rose family and cardiovascular problems posted on www.koliskoinsitute.org)



Not surprisingly a large number of laboratory and clinical studies have confirmed the wide palette of illnesses where hawthorn can be applied. With the anthroposophical understanding we can order these applications more meaningfully.

One can identify three main areas where Hawthorn might be helpful. It fights “Heaviness” in:

- The Mental sphere:

- when the heaviness manifests itself as a dark life's mood that needs to be lifted; or when life itself in the "normal" progression of the day seems almost "too heavy to bear";
- relieves a generalized sense of fatigue,
- The Cardiovascular, Rhythmical sphere:
 - heaviness manifested in the form of lower leg edema, "mild" congestive heart failure or the impending of that condition;
 - other cardiovascular related conditions where the soul life presses too hard into the bloodstream such as in blood pressure, or when the blood function literally falls too heavily down to earth and threatens to form clots;
 - "push back" against an astral body that causes rhythm disturbances both in tachycardic and bradycardic states;
- The Gastrointestinal/Will/Movement sphere:
 - When the protein processes in the digestion are "overwhelmed" and intestinal inflammation and fermentation arise; the food "falls" to earth in the intestine instead of being normally absorbed. (ex. colitis)
 - improves joint discomfort;
 - increases tolerance for exercise and physical work.



Significantly, all of the above conditions are directly related to the stresses that our culture places upon us as individuals.

The ability to squarely address these challenges makes Hawthorn among those remedies that should be taken by a large number of people as a "daily tonic" to overcome the "dis-ease" predisposing characteristics of our modern life.

As a "hygienic" remedy, one that would maintain greater health, one would think what a tremendous help it would be for people who have to stand on their feet all day and literally have to fight gravity, and heaviness in general, in their blood stream (nurses, eurhythmists(!) and all the other professions in an endlessly long list); those who have to sit at their computers all day with their feet dangling downwards; those who travel long distances. Etc.

In our Hawthorn formula we have included a unique "anthroposophic" feature: it contains the root salts and ashes of the plant. Rudolf Steiner pointed out that when burning the root of plant one essentially incorporates the Sun forces into the darkness of the root through the flames of the fire that burns the root. Consequently, especially in the case of a formula of Hawthorn this ash addition is essential. Based on personal experience and study of the literature we recommend 3 to 5 capsules daily for a more serious condition, and 1 to 2 capsules daily as "health maintenance".

(References, research articles, and botanical sources to the above ideas are given on the slides of the webinar.)

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