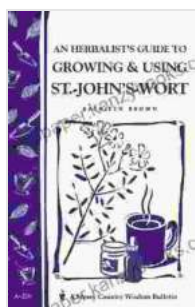


An Herbalist Guide to Growing and Using St. John's Wort

St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is a flowering plant that has been used for centuries to treat a variety of conditions, including depression, anxiety, and insomnia. It is a member of the Hypericaceae family, which also includes the genera *Hypericum*, *Triadenum*, and *Sarothra*. St. John's Wort is native to Europe, but it has been naturalized in many other parts of the world, including North America, South America, and Australia.



An Herbalist's Guide to Growing & Using St.-John's-Wort: Storey Country Wisdom Bulletin A-230

by Kathryn T Hall

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The plant grows to be about 2-3 feet tall and has bright yellow flowers that bloom in the summer. The leaves are oblong or lance-shaped and have serrated edges. The fruit is a small, brown capsule that contains numerous seeds. St. John's Wort is a hardy plant that can grow in a variety of soils and climates. It prefers full sun to partial shade and well-drained soil.

St. John's Wort is a popular herb because it is relatively easy to grow and has a wide range of medicinal uses. The aerial parts of the plant, which include the flowers, leaves, and stems, are used to make teas, tinctures, and other preparations. St. John's Wort has been shown to have a number of pharmacological effects, including antidepressant, anxiolytic, and sedative properties.

In traditional herbal medicine, St. John's Wort has been used to treat a variety of conditions, including:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Menstrual cramps
- Menopausal symptoms
- Skin wounds
- Burns

Modern research has confirmed many of the traditional uses of St. John's Wort. For example, a number of studies have shown that St. John's Wort is effective in treating mild to moderate depression. It is thought to work by increasing the levels of serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain, which are neurotransmitters that are involved in mood regulation.

St. John's Wort is also effective in treating anxiety. It is thought to work by binding to the benzodiazepine receptors in the brain, which are the same receptors that are targeted by anti-anxiety medications. St. John's Wort has

been shown to be effective in reducing anxiety symptoms in people with generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, and panic disorder.

In addition to its antidepressant and anxiolytic effects, St. John's Wort has also been shown to have sedative properties. It is thought to work by increasing the levels of GABA in the brain, which is a neurotransmitter that is involved in sleep regulation. St. John's Wort has been shown to be effective in treating insomnia in people with difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.

St. John's Wort is a safe and effective herb that can be used to treat a variety of conditions. It is important to note, however, that St. John's Wort can interact with some medications, such as antidepressants, blood thinners, and birth control pills. It is important to talk to your doctor before taking St. John's Wort if you are taking any medications.

Growing St. John's Wort

St. John's Wort is a relatively easy plant to grow. It can be grown in a variety of soils and climates, but it prefers full sun to partial shade and well-drained soil. St. John's Wort can be grown from seed or from cuttings.

Growing St. John's Wort from Seed

To grow St. John's Wort from seed, sow the seeds in a pot or seedbed filled with a well-drained potting mix. Cover the seeds with a thin layer of soil and keep them moist. The seeds will germinate in 10-14 days.

Once the seedlings have emerged, thin them out to 6-8 inches apart. Water the seedlings regularly and fertilize them every few weeks with a balanced

fertilizer.

The seedlings will be ready to transplant into the garden in the spring or fall. Choose a location that receives full sun to partial shade and has well-drained soil. Dig a hole that is twice the width of the root ball and just as deep. Place the seedling in the hole and fill it in with soil. Water the seedling well and mulch around it to help retain moisture.

Growing St. John's Wort from Cuttings

To grow St. John's Wort from cuttings, take cuttings from the tips of healthy stems in the spring or summer. The cuttings should be 4-6 inches long. Remove the leaves from the bottom half of the cuttings and dip them in rooting hormone.

Plant the cuttings in a pot or seedbed filled with a well-drained potting mix. Keep the cuttings moist and place them in a warm location out of direct sunlight. The cuttings will root in 4-6 weeks.

Once the cuttings have rooted, they can be transplanted into the garden. Choose a location that receives full sun to partial shade and has well-drained soil. Dig a hole that is twice the width of the root ball and just as deep. Place the cutting in the hole and fill it in with soil. Water the cutting well and mulch around it to help retain moisture.

Using St. John's Wort

The aerial parts of St. John's Wort, which include the flowers, leaves, and stems, are used to make teas, tinctures, and other preparations. St. John's Wort is also available in capsule and tablet form.

St. John's Wort Tea

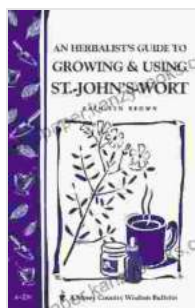
St. John's Wort tea is a simple and effective way to take this herb. To make St. John's Wort tea, add 1-2 teaspoons of dried St. John's Wort to a cup of boiling water. Steep for 5-10 minutes, then strain and enjoy.

St. John's Wort tea can be taken 2-3 times per day for mild to moderate depression, anxiety, or insomnia.

St. John's Wort Tincture

St. John's Wort tincture is a concentrated form of St. John's Wort that is made by soaking the herb in alcohol. Tinctures are more potent than teas, so they should be taken in smaller doses.

To make St. John's Wort tincture, fill a jar with fresh St. John's Wort flowers, leaves, and stems. Pour 100 proof alcohol over the h



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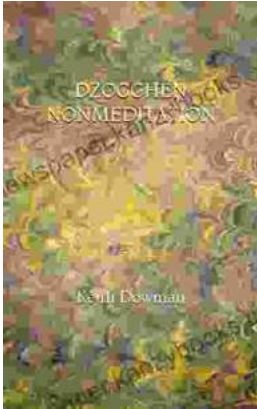
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