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Male Power!

As the stratospheric sales revenues of Viagra can attest, there is a heady market demand for male sexual enhancement products. It is estimated that as many as 50% of US males over 40 experience some degree of impotence at some point in their lives. That represents a market in the neighborhood of 30 million men. Even when impotence is not the primary issue, men are seeking ways to increase strength and stamina so that sex is more enjoyable. It's no wonder there is an erectile gold rush for products.

But many of these products are problematic. Viagra can cause headaches, nasal congestion, blurred vision, and flushing. The recent entry Uprima can cause nausea, dizziness, and in some cases, even sudden unconsciousness. Yohimbe, which is a natural herb, can be dangerous for those with kidney or liver disease and also has a range of side effects. Are there better natural solutions?

Impotence is often a symptom of underlying health problems. Psychological issues aside, impotence can be a result of poor nutrition, lack of exercise, smoking, atherosclerosis, diabetes, adrenal stress, low energy levels, or low testosterone levels. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), impotence is one of the symptoms of "kidney yang deficiency", which is, in turn, characterized by many of the above factors. For many men, a lifestyle change is sufficient to reverse the condition. But there are several herbs and formulas that can provide significant support, enhancing the male sexual experience. The most notable herb in Chinese medicine is Epimedium, which can be used alone or in the context of a formula.

Epimedium

About a month ago, we hosted noted author and medicine hunter Chris Kilham on a tour of China in search of the breakthrough herb Epimedium. While on the trip, Chris and his wife Shahannah discovered some interesting aspects of China's great and unique culture. They also found out some tantalizing facts about Epimedium and its use in supporting erectile

performance in men. *Epimedium sagittatum* (Yin Yang Huo), a woody evergreen perennial indigenous to shady mountainous areas in temperate to subtropical Asia, is commonly known as Horny Goat Weed. It was so named when it was noticed that goats, after ingesting this herb, would become very sexually active. This observation has led to many investigations into its effects on humans, which continue today with some surprising results.

During the excursion, our CEO Jerry Wu and other members of Draco's Team China guided the group on a tour of the Bozhou herb market. The 85 acre herb market at Bozhou, with over 6,000 vendors is the largest in the world. While browsing this gigantic market, teeming with activity and aromas, it became obvious that Epimedium is the king of herbal sex enhancers. In Chris's words, "When dealers noticed our apparent interest in Epimedium, they broke out in smiles. 'Very good for sex,' one told us. Another remarked, 'That will make you sexually strong.' The comments we received were pretty universal." Chinese herbalists know the herb well. It has been used in Traditional Chinese Medicine for thousands of years as a warming kidney "yang" tonic with a broad range of therapeutic applications. But it is best known as a sexual performance enhancer.

The Draco tour then led the group to the far flung upper reaches of Tianmu Mountain in Tianmushan where the Epimedium grows in clusters in rocky crevices. Most if not all the Epimedium is wildcrafted from clean, pollution free mountainous areas where it is found in seemingly endless abundance. When the aerial parts of the plant are harvested, a new plant grows quickly in its place. The leaf is the plant part used, and among the important active constituents it contains are the flavonol glycosides, such as icariin and methycariin. Much of the work on Epimedium has focused on either the whole herb or these glycosides, but the polysaccharide content is also of interest. Draco extracts a full spectrum of the herb's constituents, so both the glycoside and polysaccharide fractions are present in our extract.

At the end of a long journey in China, the Kilhams and the Draco crew ended up at our manufacturing facility in Shanghai, where 20 tons of Horny Goat Weed were awaiting extraction into Full Spectrum Standardized Herbal Extract™. Afterword, Chris wrote, "Pro-

cessing at Draco is anything but traditional. Huge extraction vessels contain tons of herbs undergoing hot water extraction at high pressure – a far cry from a home tea pot. The system is ingenious, and much of the equipment was custom designed by Jerry and his team." Both during and after the Epimedium extract is completed and dried, it is analytically tested to ensure optimum representation of the full range of constituents.

From the standpoint of Chinese medicine, Epimedium is a kidney yang tonic offering effective support in conditions that result from kidney yang deficiency. With reproductive system affinities, it helps such conditions as impotence and chronic prostatitis in males; and irregular menses, infertility and menopause in females. But it also has effects on the urinary, cardiovascular, respiratory and immune systems culminating in its overall "kidney yang tonifying" effects on the whole body. Let's take a look at each body system to understand the herb's effects from a western standpoint.

Reproductive • One of the most exciting aspects of epimedium's effects is in supporting male erectile performance. A brief explanation of the mechanisms involved in producing erection will help us to understand Epimedium's potential role in this process. A sexual thought process or physical stimulation causes the secretion of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine in the nerves of the parasympathetic nervous system. This, in turn, causes the excitation of the parasympathetic nervous system, which has nerve endings located in the penis, resulting in the release of cyclic GMP into the bloodstream. An increase in cyclic GMP enhances the production of nitric oxide, which then causes vasodilation of the penile arterioles. The vasodilation allows the flooding of the corpus cavernosum, resulting in erection. An enzyme known as phosphodiesterase type 5 breaks down cyclic GMP in the blood, reversing this effect. A well known drug for impotence on the market today functions as a phosphodiesterase inhibitor, blocking the

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Male Power!

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breakdown of cyclic GMP, maintaining vasodilation.

Epimedium has demonstrated several effects on this process in clinical and pharmacological studies. Several studies have shown that the herb has a direct vasodilating effect. One study demonstrated an increase in testosterone, a gonadal hormone known to have key responsibility for the strength, duration, and frequency of erections. Another set of researchers postulated that its effects on beta adrenoceptors resulted in increases in cyclic GMP, which, as mentioned, enhances nitric oxide production and therefore vasodilation. It was also found that icariin from Epimedium could inhibit contraction of arterial smooth muscle rings that restrict blood flow in the body, via a Ca^{++} channel blocking mechanism, further enhancing vasodilation.

Reports also indicate that Epimedium helps to increase sperm production and stimulate growth of the testes and levator rector muscle of the penis. Its effects on the endocrine system help explain how this works. The herb was found to inhibit monoamine oxidase (MAO) in the hypothalamus, leading to higher levels of the hormones noradrenaline and dopamine. These hormones are thought to be important for the normal functioning of the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus regulates important body functions such as sex drive, appetite, thirst, and sleep. It also regulates the nearby pituitary gland, which controls the release of reproductive-organ-growth inducing gonadotropins. Epimedium can support the normal functioning of the hypothalamus, thereby enhancing sex drive and gonadal growth.

And the herb could have positive effects on impotence caused by stress. Stress is often accompanied by the excess release of cortisol stress hormones, and epimedium has been shown to reduce the effects of corticoids on the body. On a subjective level, the herb was found to have aphrodisiac qualities.

Cardiovascular • Epimedium acts to stimulate cerebral and peripheral circulation by vasodilation, similar to Ginkgo leaf, assisting with such conditions as memory loss, chronic tiredness, and numbness or tingling of the extremities. There is also a long lasting cardiovascular relaxant effect, offering support for conditions such as hypertension and angina. It also helps dilate the coronary vessels, increasing coronary blood flow by reducing vascular resistance.

Other Effects • As Epimedium targets the kidneys, it is not surprising that this herb is used to improve immunologic deficiencies in chronic renal failure patients on dialysis. • The herb acts as an antitussive and expectorant. Studies of its effectiveness in 1,066

cases of chronic bronchitis demonstrated a 74.6% effectiveness rate in improving symptoms. • Epimedium has some wide ranging positive effects on immunity. It was shown to significantly enhance the phagocytic activity of macrophages. It also has antibacterial and antiviral properties, actively inhibiting the growth of staph, strep, and pneumonia bacteria. Epimedium polysaccharides were found to reverse the AZT induced inhibition of DNA synthesis and reduce the toxicity of AZT. ***Draco's Epimedium contains a Full Spectrum of plant constituents and is standardized to 10% flavonoids.***

Male Virility Formula

Because in Chinese medicine, it is a generally accepted belief that a formula is more complete than a single herb, we have a formula designed according to the principles of TCM specifically to enhance the function of the male libido. **Draco's Male Virility Formula (D-37)** is an Action Synergized Formulation™ comprising the following herbs in a finely tuned proprietary balance: *Epimedium sagittatum*, *Astragalus complanatus*, *Panax ginseng*, *Cuscuta chinensis*, *Scolopendra subsnipes multidentis*, and *Cervi Cornu Parvum*.

Epimedium plays the role of the king in the formula, responsible for its major effect, but the other herbs play important supporting roles in balancing, widening, and deepening the effects of Epimedium. *Astragalus complanatus* helps to fortify the sperm, prevent premature ejaculation and tonify kidney yang. *Panax ginseng* supports the formula as a wide ranging adaptogen and kidney yang tonic. It also enhances the relaxation of penile smooth muscle to add to erectile strength by increasing the production of nitric oxide. *Cuscuta* seed is a testosterone enhancer, also working to stimulate cGMP metabolism. *Scolopendra* has a warming effect and helps with vasodilation. *Cervi Cornu Parvum* invigorates blood circulation and also tonifies the kidney yang, qi, and blood. Specially balanced for safe usage, this herbal formula is remarkable for its enhancement of a wide range of physiological influences supporting male sexual health.

Male Balance Formula

Another formula that has proven to be worth its weight in gold is our **Male Balance Formula (D-11)**. Featuring high grade Chinese *Panax ginseng* as the king herb, the formula works to provide adaptogenic nourishment increasing vitality in the male body. **Male Balance** is an Action Synergized Formulation™ comprising these herbs in a proprietary balance specially tuned for male metabolic function: *Panax ginseng*, *Epimedium sagittatum*, *Morinda officinales*, *Polygonum multiflorum*, *Lycium chinensis*, *Cuscuta chinensis*, *Cornus officinales*, and *Cinnamomum cassia*.

Panax ginseng is the most highly regarded adaptogenic tonic in the Chinese pharmacopoeia. It helps the body adapt to stress, combat free radicals, regulate blood sugar and cholesterol levels, and boost the immune system. It's also androgenic, increasing testosterone production. Morinda root is a warming kidney yang tonic that is used as an aphrodisiac for impotence, premature ejaculation, and involuntary urine discharge. *Polygonum multiflorum*, or Foti, is a revered herb for increasing fertility, energy, strength, and vigor. It is thought to inhibit the effects of aging, promoting longevity. Lychii Berry is a powerful adaptogen, normalizing sex hormones, helping to improve sex drive, and reduce impotence and nocturnal emissions. *Cuscuta*, or Dodder Seed, is a urogenital tonic and nutrient, treating inflammation of the prostate gland, urinary incontinence, impotence, and premature ejaculation. *Cornus*, or Dogwood Fruit, is a balancing kidney yin tonic which targets the urogenital system. It is an astringent urinary tract antiseptic, controlling incontinence and involuntary ejaculation. Warming Cinnamon stimulates the circulation and helps to synergize the other tonics in the formula. ***Draco's Action Synergized Formulas™ Male Virility and Male Balance are combined before extraction to allow the herbs to "inter-react" in the formula, and are available for your private label use.***

And More!

While we are undoubtedly the best source in the market for Epimedium products, we are also the preferred source for many other extracts that have properties beneficial for enhancing male metabolic performance. **Each of the herbs in the above 2 formulas should be considered individually for inclusion in male products on the basis of their own merits.** In addition, two other herbs are worthy of mention: *Cordyceps mushroom*, and *Tribulus terrestris*. *Cordyceps* is an important and invigorating tonic for enhancing athletic performance, physical stamina and endurance, sex drive, sexual potency, and cellular energy. Though it is energizing and rejuvenating, it is also calming. *Tribulus terrestris* has been shown to be androgenic, increasing testosterone and gonadotrophin levels in males. This effect has been shown to mediate improvement of erectile response through the increased release of nitric oxide. Pharmacological studies with rats showed significant increases in the size of reproductive organs and in sexual activity subsequent to using *Tribulus*. ***Please contact us for more detailed information and references on any of Draco's extracts for Male Power!*** ❖