



Propolis

Propolis is a resin collected by the honey bee from trees and plants. It is taken back to the hive where it is worked on and wax is added.

Propolis is used in the hive for a variety of defensive and protective purposes. Propolis has antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and antifungal properties. It has been used as a medicine by man for 3000 years. Modern researchers have confirmed some of its traditional uses.

HISTORY OF PROPOLIS

Propolis comes from the Greek and means Pro-before Polis-the city, which translates as Defences before the City or Defender of the City. The city here is the city or hive of bees where Propolis plays a vital role in protecting the colony from invasion from the outside as well as from the spread of infection within. Propolis provides the bee city with its immune system. This fact gives some indication of its potential importance today for man, at a time when his own immune system is increasingly unable to cope with so many of the diseases of our time.

The Greeks recognised the healing qualities of Propolis, using it for treating wounds as well as ‘incurable diseases’. Hippocrates himself, the father of modern medicine, prescribed Propolis for the healing of sores and ulcers, both internal and external.

For the Egyptians, the bee had a religious significance, and was a symbol of courage and valour. Propolis was used medically by the Egyptians for a variety of diseases. The Romans also revered the bee and Propolis extensively.

The Roman God Jupiter, so the legend goes, even

transformed the beautiful Melissa into a bee so that she could produce the miraculous healer-Propolis. Pliny, the Roman historian, said of Propolis “Current physicians use Propolis as a medicine because it extracts stings and all substances embedded in the flesh, reduces swelling, softens indurations, soothes pain of sinews and heals sores when it appears hopeless for them to mend”.

European interest in Propolis appears in John Gerard’s famous *Historie of Plants* in 1579 where Propolis is referred to as a substance ‘which can provide swift and effective healing for many conditions’

Nicholas Culpeper in his *Compleat Herbal* tells us that “Propolis is singularly good for all heat and inflammation in many parts of the body and cools the heat of the wound”.

The development of modern medicine has seen Propolis and many other natural remedies neglected and forgotten. It is really only in the last 20 — 30 years that modern medicine, particularly in Eastern Europe, has again begun to use Propolis therapeutically, to study it and to appreciate its healing potential.

WHAT IS PROPOLIS?

The largest single ingredient of Propolis (just over half) is resin collected from plants and trees (particularly the poplar tree). The other half is made up of wax (30%), essential oils (10%) and pollen (5%). You also find, in Propolis, a wide variety of additional elements including organic and amino acids, vitamins, minerals and most importantly bioflavonoids, now believed to be an active ingredient in the healing process. All of these ingredients are worked on and mixed with the bees’ own salivary secretions to produce what has been called Bee Glue, that is, Propolis. Propolis is a sticky filler substance, which the bees use to seal up the hive, protecting it from the outside environment. The bees also coat the entire inside surface of the hive with Propolis, polishing it to create one of the most sterile environments known to nature.

As well as producing a purely functional role in sealing and reinforcing the hive, Propolis also performs the role of immune system for the hive, acting as a combined antibiotic, antiviral and antifungal substance: Truly a defender of the city.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

Over the last 20 years much scientific and medical research has been undertaken into Propolis, both in this country

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and in America, as well as in Eastern Europe, where the medical use of Propolis is common. The research has shown Propolis to be effective in treating amongst other things:-

BLOOD DISORDERS

Chinese researchers found it effective in treating hypertension, arteriosclerosis and coronary disease.

European scientist V. Balalykin tells us that Propolis helps the white blood cells to engulf and digest bacteria and other waste products in the blood.

GASTRO INTESTINAL PROBLEMS

Soviet scientists and doctors have shown that Propolis can prevent ulcer and abscess formation, as well as speeding up the healing process.

SKIN PROBLEMS

Research in America, Poland and Russia has shown that acne, allergies, herpes and other dermatological disorders have all responded to Propolis therapy.

THE WOMAN'S FRIEND

Propolis has become known as the 'Woman's Friend'. It has been shown to be helpful with painful periods as well as with vaginal infections and sores.

A Natural Antibiotic?

Propolis is being hailed as a natural antibiotic with no side effects. Recent research at the National Heart and Lung Institute, London has shown that the bioflavonoids in Propolis are even capable of destroying some bacteria that have now become resistant to modern synthetic antibiotics.

WHAT CAN YOU USE IT FOR?

As a Food Supplement: Propolis can be used as a safe non-toxic food supplement and has been found helpful in protection against colds, coughs, flu and other viruses.

It has also been found effective for:

Sore throats: Take a few drops of the tincture on wholewheat bread or use it as a gargle.

Respiratory Problems: coughs and colds, asthma, bronchitis, blocked sinuses. Take the tincture of 2.0 g per day.

Sore lips/gums/teeth and any **other dental problems:** Use the tincture as a gargle, or drink it with herb tea (add honey if you wish) or fruit juice.

Skin treatment: Swab the area directly with tincture or use cream. Good for acne. Can be helpful in treating eczema, psoriasis and herpes.

Burns and Bruises: The antiseptic and healing qualities of Propolis help wounds and burns to heal. Place a little cream on the affected area or use a few drops of the raw tincture.

Arthritis and Rheumatic ailments: In recent years Propolis has been used very successfully to treat arthritic disorders. Take 2.0 g per day for a two week period to start with.

RECOMMENDED USAGE

Capsules/Tablets

Use as a food supplement for general health. Recommended dosage between 1.0 and 3.0 g per day

Tincture/Solutions

For external use:

apply directly to affected area using a cotton swab or lint.

Cream

Apply directly to the affected area.

Information from Materia Medica www.materiamedica.org.uk

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