

Saw Palmetto

Latin name: *Serenoa repens*

Family: Arecaceae

Miscellaneous:

- a.k.a. Sabal
- From 1906-1950 saw palmetto was an official drug under the title "Serenoa". *Serenoa* was indicated for treatment of urogenital ailments.¹
- Researchers in Europe discovered that in patients suffering from BPH (benign prostatic hypertrophy), extract from saw palmetto fruit reduced residual urine and frequency of urination, while increasing urinary flow and ease in micturition.
- A 1998 JAMA article covering 18 studies that included 2,929 men reported that "*S. repens* improves urologic symptoms and flow measures."²
- Though saw palmetto relieves symptoms, it does not reduce the size of the prostate.

Uses:

Treatment of BPH, systemic inflammatory disorders, and antiedematous effects.

Mechanism:

MOA is unclear. Research evidence indicates that this herb's spasmolytic effect on the contraction of smooth muscle is via the inhibition of Ca⁺ influx at the plasma membrane level.¹ Anti-inflammatory activity is probably due to inhibition of the COX and 5-lipoxygenase pathways. In doing so, leukotrienes and prostaglandins (inflammation-producing compounds) would not be able to be synthesized. It is also apparent that antiedematous activity demonstrated by saw palmetto is due to arachidonic acid cascade inhibition.¹ German health authorities have validated this herb's ability to effectively treat BPH.

*The primary activity of saw palmetto is contained within the nonpolar substituents.¹ Therefore, the active constituents would not be properly/effectively delivered as a tea or water-diluted dosage form due to the non-solubility of the compounds accounting for the therapeutic effect.

Dosage:

1-2 g of powdered supplement/day or 320 mg of an alcohol extract

*As mentioned, tea would not be a beneficial dosage form for this herb.

Citation References:

1. Tyler, V., Robbers, J.: *Tyler's Herbs of Choice: The Therapeutic Use of Phytomedicinals*: 1999, pp. 103-105.
2. Duke, J.: *Dr. Duke's Essential Herbs*: 1999, pp. 217-233.

General References:

1. Tyler, V., Robbers, J.: *Tyler's Herbs of Choice: The Therapeutic Use of Phytomedicinals*: 1999, pp. 103-105.
2. Facts And Comparisons: *Guide To Popular Natural Products*: 1999, pp. 202-203.
3. Duke, J.: *Dr. Duke's Essential Herbs*: 1999, pp. 217-233.
4. Duke, J.: *The Green Pharmacy*: 1997, pp. 448-450.