

BENEFITS OF HOLY BASIL(TULSI) LEAFS



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INTRODUCTION

The queen of herbs is the most sacred herb of India. Tulsi (*Ocimum Sanctum*) also known as 'HolyBasil. Tulsi has 3 varieties as Rama Tulsi, Krishna Tulsi, Vana Tulsi, Tulsi is a rich in antioxidant and renowned for it's restorative powers. Tulsi contain hundreds of beneficial compounds known as phytochemicals, these compounds possess strong antioxidant antibacterial, antiviral, adaptogenic, and immune enhancing properties that promote general health. *Ocimum sanctum* has specific aromatics odour. Because of the presence of essential or volatile oil. Mainly concern treated in the leaf.

TULSI:

Popularly known in the western world as Holy basil, the Latin name of Tulsi is *Ocimum tenuiflorum* or *Ocimum sanctum*. The Tulsi plant is a heavily branched small shrub which is widely grown in India for medicinal as well as religious purposes. The word "tulsi" means "the incomparable plant". The plant can grow up to a height of about 60 cm and has hairy stems with oval-shaped leaves of about 5 cm in length. There are two main varieties of the Holy basil, the one with the green leaves is called Rama or Shri Tulsi and the one with the reddish leaves is called Krishna or Shyama tulsi. Tulsi is used in many forms which includes in the form of a Tulsi tea, juice, fresh leaves, and dried powdered form.

Tulsi in Hinduism

As mentioned above, the Holy basil possesses excellent medicinal properties. This is probably one of the main reasons why this plant is so revered in Hinduism. Hindus consider their house as incomplete if they don't have a Tulsi plant within the place itself. In Hindu



mythology, Tulsi is very dear to Lord Vishnu. On the 11th bright day of the month of Kartika (around mid-October) in the Hindu calendar, Tulsi is ceremonially married to Lord Vishnu in what is called *tulsi vivah*. This symbolic marriage denotes the beginning of one of the most auspicious periods for marriage in Hindu culture. It is usually the woman of the household who take care of the plant. They water it, light the diya (small earthen lamp), and worship the plant after taking a bath in the morning. It is considered to be auspicious to have the Holy basil as it is believed to promote longevity and happiness for the residents of the household.

CHEMICAL COMPOSITION IN TULSI:-

Tulsi leaves contain bright yellow coloured volatile oil. Volatile oil from tulsi is obtained from steam distillation method.

Chemicals that are present in the tulsi volatile oil are eugenol, carvacrol, eugenol-methyl-ether and caryophyllin. Seeds of tulsi contains oil with good drying properties. Tulsi plant consists of alkaloids, glycosides, saponins, tannins, small amount of vitamin C and traces of maleic, citric and tartaric acids. Some of the main chemical constituents of tulsi are: oleanolic acid, ursolic acid, rosmarinic acid, eugenol, carvacrol, linalool, β -caryophyllene (about 8%), β -elemene (c.11.0%), and germacrene D (about 2%). Isolated *O. sanctum* extracts have some antibacterial activity against *E. coli*, *S. aureus* and *P. aeruginosa*.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF TULSI:

Tulsi is widely used in Ayurveda for medicinal purposes. Eugenol, found in *Ocimum sanctum*, is believed to be the main constituent responsible for the medicinal properties of the Holy basil. The plant has also been found to have antimicrobial properties, thanks to the ursolic acid and carvacrol constituents found in it. Along with antimicrobial properties, the phytochemicals present in tulsi offer antioxidant as well as immune - enhancing qualities. It also has adaptogenic properties, that is, it enhances the body's ability to adapt to stress.

A. Respiratory benefits of tulsi

For asthma and bronchitis:- The leaves of the Tulsi are effective expectorants and promote the release of mucus in bronchitis and asthma, thus, facilitating breathing. A decoction made of Tulsi leaves, honey and ginger is effective for asthma, bronchitis and influenza.

For cold and flu:- Chewing the leaves of the Holy basil helps relieve symptoms of cold and flu.

For sore throat:- Boil a few leaves of Tulsi in about half a litre of water. Drink this Tulsi tea or use it as a gargle at least three times a day. You can also add cloves to this decoction for more benefits.

B. Relieves fever

➤ The antimicrobial properties of the Tulsi leaves make it an excellent treatment for fever. As we know, fever is not a disease by itself. In fact, it is caused by infections caused due to viruses, bacteria, fungus, protozoa or due to allergens.

➤ Tulsi is quite effective in bringing down temperature and can safely be used with children too. It also protects an individual from malarial and dengue fever, which are caused due to mosquito bites.

➤ The leaves can be boiled in half a litre of water and mixed with honey and milk. Tulsi extract added to water can also be given every 2-3 hours for bringing down the fever.

C. Beneficial for the kidneys

Tulsi juice and honey taken regularly for 6 months may help in expelling a kidney stone that is smaller than 5mm through the urinary tract. Regular intake of Tulsi leaves may also reduce uric acid levels and promote proper cleansing of the kidneys through urination.

D. Effective for skin disorders

❖ The juice of the Tulsi plant may help in the treatment of skin diseases such as ringworm and leucoderma.

❖ Tulsi leaves can be applied as poultice on the infected area to cure skin diseases. You can also add a decoction of Tulsi leaves to your bath water to cure infections as well as prevent their occurrence.

❖ It is also effective for insect as well as snake and scorpion bites. It can be taken internally as well as applied on the infected area. Take a teaspoon of the Tulsi extract every 3 hours. Apply the extract on the affected area as and when required.

E. Cardiovascular benefits

❖ It may reduce blood cholesterol levels and have benefits for the heart. Its antioxidant properties protect the heart from free radical damage. Regular intake of Tulsi tea also reduces high blood pressure.

F. Beneficial for the nerves and brain

❖ Tulsi acts a nerve tonic and improves brain functioning. It improves concentration and sharpens memory.

G. Oral and dental Benefits

❖ The antibacterial properties of the Holy basil keep your mouth and teeth free from bacteria. Tulsi juice works

as an excellent mouth freshener, prevents bad breath, and cures ulcers in the mouth.

❖ It also prevents the occurrence of dental cavities, tartar and plaque. Tulsi is also beneficial for strengthening gums and preventing tooth decay.

❖ Instead of chewing the leaves, use Tulsi tea for promoting oral and dental health since the mercury in the leaves may damage your teeth. You can also use the dried and powdered leaves as toothpaste for curing dental and gum diseases such as pyorrhea.

H. Beneficial as an eye wash

❖ Regular consumption of Tulsi may protect your eyes from various diseases such as glaucoma and macular degeneration. It also soothes the eyes and reduces strain caused due to constant computer use.

❖ Soak the leaves of the Holy basil in a cup of water and let it stay overnight. Strain the water and use it as an eye wash. You can also dip cotton ball into this liquid and place it on your eyes. Blink a few times to get relief in eye strain and other eye diseases. You can also instil two drops of basil juice.

I. Good for headaches

❖ Applying a poultice of pounded Tulsi leaves on the forehead helps relieve headache caused due to heat, stress and eye strain. You can also drink Tulsi tea to relieve migraine and other stress headaches.



J. Anti-ageing properties

❖ Its antioxidant properties prevent the body from damages caused due to free radicals, thus, delaying the aging process and the appearance of wrinkles and other signs of aging.

K. More benefits of tulsi

❖ Chemicals found in Tulsi may decrease pain and inflammation. It may lower blood sugar in diabetics. Although more studies are needed, preliminary research has revealed that the antioxidant properties of Tulsi seed

oil may slow down the progression of certain types of cancer.

❖ The Holy basil may be beneficial for the treatment of tuberculosis as well. Tulsi extracts may also help in weight loss because of its ability to reduce cortisol levels.

❖ Rub Tulsi oil on the exposed areas of your body to keep mosquitoes and other insects away.

❖ Beads made of this plant are considered to have medicinal as well as divine properties. It is believed that Tulsi protects one from negative influences.

ABSTRACT:

Raaz Maheshwari, et.al. (2013) states that the unique chemistry of Tulsi is highly multifarious. Tulsi contains hundreds of beneficial compounds known as phyto-chemicals. Working together, these compounds possess strong antioxidant, antibacterial, antiviral, adaptogenic, and immune-enhancing properties that promote general health and support the body's natural defense against stress and diseases. The essential oils in the leaves of Tulsi that contribute to the fragrance and refreshing flavor of Tulsi Tea, are a particularly rich source of valuable phyto-chemicals. It acts as adaptogen (an adaptogen is an agent that helps the body adapt more efficiently to stress. Adaptogens reduce the intensity and negative impact of the stress caused by mental tension, emotional difficulties, poor lifestyle habits, disease and infection, pollution and other factors. Tulsi is one of the most effective adaptogens known.), antioxidant (an antioxidants slow down the process of excess oxidation



and protect cells from the damage caused by free radicals. When cells are attacked by free radicals, excess oxidation occurs which damage and destroy cells. Antioxidants stop this process. The cellular damage caused by free radicals can be responsible for causing and/or accelerating many diseases. Tulsi is rich in antioxidants and is recommended to guard against free radicals and protect from damaging excess oxidation and

as an immuno - modulator which is an agent that balances and improves the immune response of the body in fighting antigens (disease causing agents such as bacteria, viruses, microbes, allergens etc.) and maintaining health. In this article various therapeutic applications of tulsi leaves have been delineated precisely.

Conclusion:-

The nutritional and pharmacological properties of the Tulsi in its natural form as it has been traditionally used. The medicinal ingredients in Tulsi must have for longer and peaceful life after research it proved and certified that it is safe to consume Tulsi in any form. These remedial properties are well accepted by modern science. Tulsi possesses wide range of therapeutic properties, Tulsi commonly used to treatment of coughs, colds, flu, head and ear aches, rheumatism, arthritis etc. Tulsi is herb that cures the mankind from all naturally in today's lifestyle.

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