

Latin: *Ocimum sanctum* Linn.

Family: Labiatae

Vernacular names: Sanskrit - Tulasi - Tulssi - Surasa - Krishnamul - Vishnu-priya; Hindi - Kala-tulasi; English - Holy basil; Unani - Tulsi; Bengali - Krishna tulasai; Tamil - Thulasi

Part Used: leaves, seeds, root

Ayurvedic Energetics: Rasa: pungent, bitter Veerya: heating Vipaka: pungent Guna: light, sharp, dry

Doshas: VK -; P+

Pharmacological Action: demulcent, expectorant, anticatarrhal, antispasmodic, anthelminthic

Traditional Uses: The leaf infusion or fresh leaf juice is commonly used in cough, mild upper respiratory infections, bronchospasm, stress-related skin disorders and indigestion. It is combined with ginger and maricha (black pepper) in bronchial asthma. It is given with honey in bronchitis and cough. The leaf juice is taken internally and also applied directly on cutaneous lesions in ringworm. The essential oil has been used in ear infections. The seeds are considered a general nutritious tonic.

Indications: bronchospasm, cough, indigestion, catarrh

Formulations and Dosage: fresh leaf juice : 15-20 ml with honey tid leaf infusion : 2-3 oz tid

Clinical Research: The ethanolic extract of the leaves exhibited a hypoglycemic effect in rats and an antispasmodic effect in isolated guinea pig ileum. Tulsi extract was administered to 20 patients with shortness of breath secondary to tropical eosinophilia in an oral dosage of 500 mg TID and an improvement in breathing was noted. The aqueous extract showed a hypotensive effect on anesthetised dogs and cats and negative inotropic and chronotropic activity (reduces the force and rate, respectively) on rabbit's heart. Antibacterial activity has been shown against *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Mycoplasma tuberculosis* in vitro as well as against several other species of pathogens including fungi. The plant has had general adaptogenic effects in mice and rats and has been shown to protect against stress-induced ulcers. It has also shown to be protective against histamine-induced bronchospasm in animals.