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## Review of *Arnica montana*

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### Abstract

*Arnica montana* common name is leopards bane. It is widely used in homoeopathic system of medicine. Its main indications are traumatic affections of muscles, mechanical injuries and compound fractures. *Arnica montana* indication is sore, lame, bruised feeling all through the body as if beaten. Moreover it is also proven as anti-inflammatory and prevention of pain. However, more research studies are required for proven its efficacy on scientific ground.

**Keywords:** *Arnica montana*, homoeopathic remedy

### Introduction

*Arnica montana* is a flowering plant about 18 – 60 cm (7.1 – 23.6 in) tall aromatic fragrant, perennial herb. Its basal green ovate ciliate leaves with rounded tips are bright coloured and level to the ground. In addition, they are some what downy on their upper surface, veined and aggregated in rosettes. By contrast, the upper leaves are opposed, spear shaped and smaller which is an exception within the Asteraceae. The chromosome number in  $2n=38$ . The flowering season is between May and August (central Europe). The hairy flowers are composed of yellow disc florets in the center and orange-yellow ray florets at the external part. The achenes have a one-piece rough pappus which opens in dry conditions <sup>[1]</sup>. *Arnica montana* is a hemicycrotophyte, which helps the plant to survive the extreme over wintering condition of its habitat. In addition, arnica forms rhizomes, which grow in a two-year cycle: the rosette part grows at its front while its tail is slowly dying <sup>[2]</sup> *Arnica montana* is widespread across most of Europe <sup>[9]</sup> It is absent from the British Isles and the Italian and Balkan peninsulas and Slovakia <sup>[10]</sup>. In addition, it is considered extinct in Hungary and Lithuania.<sup>3</sup> *Arnica montana* grows in nutrient-poor siliceous meadows or clay soils. It mostly grows on alpine meadows and up to nearly 3,000 m (9,800 ft). In more upland regions, it may also be found on nutrient poor moors and heaths. However Arnica does not grow on lime soil, thus it is an extremely reliable bioindicator for nutrient poor and acidic soils. It is rare overall, but may be locally abundant. It is becoming rarer, particularly in the north of its distribution, largely due to increasingly intensive agriculture and commercial wild-crafting. Nevertheless, it is cultivated on a large scale in Estonia. The main constituents of *Arnica montana* are essential oils, fatty acids, thymol. Pseudoguaianolide sesquiterpene lactones and flavanone glycosides. Pseudoguaianolide sesquiterpenes constitute 0.2–0.8 % of the flower head of *Arnica montana*. They are the toxin helenalin and their fatty esters, 2,5 dimethoxy-p-cymene and thymol methyl ether are the primary components of essential oils from both the plants roots and rhizomes <sup>[4]</sup>.

Although *Amica montana*'s main pharmacologically active constituent (helenalin) is safe and beneficial in the very small quantities used in herbal medicine (as an anti-inflammatory and analgesic) <sup>[5]</sup>. it is extremely toxic and almost always fatal in larger doses. Using whole plant material can result in sudden death, and only standardized preparations of the plant should be used (sparingly) for medicinal purposes (even then, concentrated, purified, and standardized pharmaceutical grade preparations of helenalin are considered highly preferable due to their significantly more accurate dosing and lack of pharmaceutically active minor *Amica montana* alkaloids which are invariably present in plant derived extracts) <sup>[6]</sup>.

Many of the plants trace alkaloids are more toxic than helenalin by one or more orders of magnitude acting as potent hepatotoxins, cytotoxins, mutagens, teratogens and neurotoxic central nervous system stimulants.

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(I) Flower in Stage

(II) Fruiting Stage



(III) Mature Fruit Stage

(IV) Seeds of Arnica

Fig 1: Different Stages of *Arnica montana*

**Generalities**

*Arnica montana* is a traumatic remedy par excellence. Trauma in all its varieties – mental or physical and their effects recent or remote are met with by this remedy. It affects blood causing putrid and septic condition. Blood vessels are relaxed causing ecchymosis, blue black spots, with tendency to haemorrhage, epistaxis etc. it acts up on nerves causing neuralgia. Muscles feel very sore, painful, bruised, all over. Parts become sore, after the pains or after bleeding. It is a prophylactic for pus formation. Burrowing pus. Has absorbent action. Progressive emaciation. Great prostration, tired feeling. Discharges are foul, breath, taste, flatus, stools etc., churning pain. bed feels hard or full of lumps. Involuntary evacuations. Abscesses that do not mature. Pains are paralytic, sudden, shifting pains from joint to joint. It acts best in plethoric, dark haired persons of rigid muscles, nervous sanguine nature. It acts but feebly on persons who are positively debilitated with impoverished blood and soft flesh. Compound fractures. Twitching in tendons, muscles. Osteomyelitis. Ill effects of fright, financial loss, anger, repentance, excessive use of any organ, vaginitis in females and impotence in males from excessive sexual indulgence. Exertion of any kind. Mind and uterine symptoms alternate. Complaints when over hurried. Apoplexy. Typhoid, septic fevers. Recurring boils. Surgical operations. Insect stings. Splinters. Thrombosis. All symptoms are aggravated by falls, blows, bruises, shock, jarring, after labour, after sleep, motion, damp cold and coal gas and reduced symptoms by lying down and lying with head low or outstretched.

**Mind symptoms**

Belladonna patient fear touch or the approach of anyone. Unconscious, when spoken to answers correctly but relapses. Indifference, inability to perform continuous active work, morose, delirious, nervous, cannot bear pain, whole body oversensitive, say there is nothing the matter with him, wants to be let alone, agoraphobia (fear of space), after mental strain or shock.



Fig 2: Oversensitive & Hallucinations of Arnica

**Head symptoms**

Brain feels tired, burning. Vertigo is chronic in nature. Vertigo occur in aged with nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, objects whirl < by walking. Vertigo more by walking, sitting, erect, closing eyes. Headache as from a nail. Head hot with cold body. Cold spot on the forehead. Hot spots on vertex. Meningitis from injury to head. Head throws backwards while walking.

**Other symptoms**

Eyes of the *Arnica montana* patients are diplopia from traumatism, muscular paralysis, retinal haemorrhage, bruised, sore feeling in eyes after close work, must keep eyes open, dizzy on closing them, feel tired and weary after sight seeing, moving pictures etc., ears of the patients are noise in ear caused by rush of blood to the head, shooting in and around ears, blood from ears, dullness of hearing after concussion, pain in cartilages of ears as if bruised. Bleeding after every fit of coughing, dark fluid blood, nose feels sore and cold. Mouth is fetid breath, dry and thirsty, bitter taste, taste as from bad eggs, soreness of gums after teeth extraction, empyema of maxillary sinus. Face is sunken, very red, heat in lips and herpes in face [8]  
 Stomach complaints are longing for vinegar, distaste for milk and meat, canine hunger, vomiting of blood, pain in stomach during eating, repletion with loathing, oppressive gases pass upward and downward, pressure as from a stone, feeling as if stomach were passing against spine, fetid vomiting. Abdomen is stitches under false ribs, distended, offensive flatus, sharp thrusts through abdomen. Stools are straining of tenesmus in diarrhoea, offensive, brown, bloody, putrid, involuntary, looks like brown yeast, must lie down after every stool, diarrhoea of consumption, worse lying on left side, dysenteric stools with muscular pains. Female complaints is bruised parts after labor, violent after pains, uterine haemorrhage from mechanical injury after coition, sore nipples, mastitis from injury [9]

**Respiratory system**

Respiratory is coughs depending on cardiac lesion, paroxysmal at night, during sleep, worse exercise. Acute tonsillitis, swelling of soft palate and uvula, pneumonia, approaching paralysis, hoarseness from over use of voice, raw, sore feeling in morning, cough produced by weeping and lamenting, dry from tickling low down in trachea. Bloody expectoration, dyspnoea with haemoptysis. All bones and cartilages of chest painful. Violent spasmodic cough with facial herpes, whooping cough, child cries before coughing, pleurodynia.



**Fig 3:** Bloody expectoration in Arnica

Heart is pain especially wevere in elbow of left arm, angina pectoris, stitches in heart, pulse feeble and irregular, cardiac dropsy with distressing dyspnoea, extremities distended, feel bruised and sore fatty heart and hypertrophy.

#### **Skin complaints**

Arnica patients dermatology complaints are black and blue, itching, burning, eruption of small pimples, crops of small boils, ecchymosis, bed sores, acne indurate, characterized by symmetry in distribution.

#### **Fever of belladonna patient**

Febrile symptoms closely related to typhoid, shivering over whole body, heat and redness of head with coolness of rest of body, internal heat, feet and hands cold, nightly sour sweats.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Modalities**

##### **Aggravation**

Lest touch, motion, rest, wine, damp cold.

##### **Amelioration**

Lying down or with head low.

#### **Complementary**

Acon, Ipec.

#### **Relationship**

Antidotes: camph.

#### **Discussion**

*Arnica montana* in homoeopathy system of medicine is used for various kinds of ailments, especially skin, fever, female complaints and respiratory complaints. The basic indication in any ailments is sore, lame, bruised feeling. *Arnica montana* is a good analgesic and anti inflammatory when it is prescribed on totality of symptoms.

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