



Butcher's Broom

It's a wonderful way to *relieve excess fluid in the system or a bloated feeling*. If you are troubled with varicose veins or swelling brought on by excess water or poor circulation, Butcher's Broom may just provide the relief you seek.

Information: Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

Botanical: *Ruscus aculeatus*

Family: *Liliaceae* (lily)

Other common names: Kneeholy, Knee Holly, Kneeholm, Jew's Myrtle, Sweet Broom, Pettigree, Box Holly

History: Butcher's Broom is a low, hardy, shrubby evergreen that is native to the Mediterranean regions, but grows throughout Europe and elsewhere in woods and waste places. The plant thrives in almost any soil, but prefers dry, well-drained soil in sun or shade. Like holly, it has prickly leaves and a single sharp spine. The name, *Butcher's Broom*, is derived from the fact that the dried plant was actually used as a broom (until the twentieth century!) throughout Europe, mostly by butchers who used it to whisk scraps from their cutting blocks. The aerial parts and roots (which are thick and deep) are used in herbal medicine. Ancient Mediterranean healers utilized the root for circulatory and inflammatory disorders, and Greek doctors reported curing swelling with its use, referring to Butcher's Broom as "the miracle herb." The first-century Roman scholar, Pliny, described its use as a cure for varicose veins in the first century, while Dioscorides highly recommended it as a diuretic and aperient (mild laxative), as well as a remedy for kidney stones and dropsy (edema). The herb was used regularly for many years to treat jaundice, gout and kidney and bladder stones, but recent use concentrates on venous insufficiency and hemorrhoids. Some of the constituents in Butcher's

Broom include alkaloids, flavonoids, beta-carotene, chrysophanic acid, glycolic acid, rutin, saponin, calcium, chromium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silicon, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamin C.

Beneficial Uses: Butcher's Broom is thought to be a mild, but extremely effective, diuretic that promotes the flow of urine and helps to reduce excess fluids and water from the body. This is especially beneficial for relieving bloated feelings and may help to lose excess water weight. Because it encourages the flow of urine, it is useful for combating bladder and urinary infections and is also thought to enhance the health of the kidneys and bladder.

Butcher's Broom is said to be particularly helpful in relieving edema, the accumulation of fluid in tissues (swelling). In clinical trials, Butcher's Broom was shown to reduce swelling in the upper arm after radiation treatment. It is also thought to ease swollen lymph glands caused by syphilis and may alleviate the pain and swelling in the carpal tunnel of the wrist, caused by repetitive motion. It is said to be

especially good for swollen ankles, a common problem with many people, including older adults and people with chronic fatigue syndrome, diabetes, scrofulous growths or Parkinson's disease.

Butcher's Broom is believed to support good circulation throughout the body and help relieve circulatory disorders, especially to the legs. The herb is said to have cleansing properties, particularly within the blood vessels, and maintain healthy blood viscosity and cholesterol levels. It is thought to reduce venous capacity and the pooling of blood in the legs. Butcher's Broom increases the tone in the veins and has protective effects on the lining and smooth muscle of the capillaries. Butcher's Broom's flavonoid content strengthens blood vessels, reduces capillary fragility and helps to maintain healthy circulation.

Further venal health is demonstrated in the chemical constituents of Butcher's Broom. The saponin glycoside, ruscogenin, helps to tighten and strengthen the veins and make them less porous. This encourages blood to move up and out of the legs, and these qualities make Butcher's Broom

excellent in cases of varicose veins, thrombophlebitis and chilblains.

Butcher's Broom is said to be good for hemorrhoids by tightening the dilated blood vessels that form hemorrhoids, and is believed to be particularly effective for easing the burning and itching sensations accompanying inflamed hemorrhoids.

Butcher's Broom is thought to help orthostatic hypotension (a drop in blood pressure upon rising from a sitting position that causes dizziness and fainting) and is also believed to be useful for alleviating vertigo.

Contraindications: Butcher's Broom is most effective when taken with vitamin C. Large amounts of Butcher's Broom (many times the recommended dosage) should not be taken, as it may cause vomiting, purging, low blood pressure and toxicity. Butcher's Broom should not be taken with high blood pressure medications nor with medications for benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH) or MAO inhibitors. It is recommended that this herb be used under the supervision of a health care provider.

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