

# Wallsend Nurseries

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## Arthritis Herb



The botanical name for the arthritis plant is *Centella asiatica*. It is also known by many other names such as Gotu Kola, Pennywort, Marsh Penny & White Root.

It normally is found growing widespread in damp ground, along roads, near swamps, in gardens. It is found in all states of Australia. Note that there may be two species or subspecies involved. One has quite large leaves & may have less active constituents than its smaller leafed cousin so is less often used. It is a perennial herb creeping along the ground and rooting at leaf nodes. Its leaves are heart shaped to circular or kidney shaped with straight or regularly shallow lobed margins. They may be slightly hairy and vary from 2-3cm in length. Flowers occur in small heads of three to four with small leaf-like bracts under the flower head. Petals are pink or white and overlap. The fruit is compressed sideways and measures 3mm or so in diameter.

This plant has been used over the centuries to treat various illnesses but its most prevalent use in modern times is involved in the treatment of Arthritis and related illness.

Many different useful substances have been isolated from this plant & studied. Of medicinal value are the following groups of substances:

Triterpenoid glycosides (including asiaticoside), Vallerin, Tannins, Alkaloid Volatile oil & Pectin.

Many useful properties of the plant have also been identified:

Diuretic Aperient / bitter digestive tonic, Alterative tonic, Relaxing nervine, Immunostimulant, Antiemetic, Hypocholesterolaemic, Decreases mean blood urea levels, Locally cleansing and healing. Supposedly, it can also be destructive of the bacillus that causes Leprosy as well as fever reduction. It is a stimulant if used in small doses & supposedly has a narcotic effect if used in large doses.

The active constituent is actually poisonous and so should not be consumed in too large a quantity. 0.5 – 2 grams dried herb per day or 2 leaves of approximately 40mm diam each would be an appropriate dosage.

The leaves or dried herb need to be consumed daily, not on an irregular basis, as the effect appears to be cumulative.

Side-effects possible from usage include:

Stupor and headache, and with some people vertigo and coma are a possibility.

Long term use of fresh leaf may cause mouth ulcers, nausea and diarrhoea.

*Can be safely consumed when used appropriately under most circumstances.*

The plant needs only to have a sunny or semi shaded position to grow well & plenty of water especially during the drier months. If grown in full sun it tends to take on a bitter taste. As it is a rampant & somewhat invasive grower, we tend to grow it in pots to keep it contained. Liquid fertiliser applied on a regular basis will ensure a continuous supply of leaves for use.