

## **Medicinal**

The leaves, flowering tops and fruit (berries) are used medicinally in modern herbal medicine.

Hawthorn has been shown to improve heart blood flow and lower blood lipid levels. It also has an anti-inflammatory action. It may also be liver protective.

Research has shown it particularly useful in treatment of congestive heart failure.

It also has an anti-viral action – against herpes simplex (cold sore) virus.

Dosage range : infusion of dried herb – up to 2g three times a day.

(Braun and Cohen, p412 – 415.)

## **Constituents**

Leaves and flowers contain approximately 1% flavonoids such as rutin and quercetin and 1-3% oligomeric procyanidins.

Also contains Vitamin C (40-60mg/100mg of berries), carotene (5mg/100mg berries) and other vitamins and minerals.

## **Contraindications/cautions**

Care when harvesting as thorns are long and sharp – wear gloves and protect your arms.

Hawthorn may help lower blood pressure therefore use with caution when taking antihypertensive pharmaceuticals.

## **References:**

Bown, D. ( 1995 ) Encyclopedia of Herbs and their Uses. Dorling Kindersley. NSW. Australia.

Chevallier, A. (1996) The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants. Dorling Kindersley, London.

Braun, L and Cohen, M. (2007). Herbs and Natural Supplements. An evidence-based guide. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Churchill Livingstone. Sydney, Australia.





## HAWTHORN

(*Crataegus laevigata* and *monogyna*)

Family: Rosaceae



Common name Haw, Maythorn, Hedgethorn

### Description

Deciduous small tree growing to 5-6 metres, densely branched and spiny, with lobed ovate leaves. Scented white flowers appear in late Spring, followed by dark red, egg-shaped fruits. (Bown, 1995, p 112).

### Habitat

Occurs throughout northern temperate regions, including Europe and China. Used as a hedgerow in New Zealand farm settlements.

### Cultivation

Likes a sunny position. Can be propagated by seed gathered when ripe and stratified for 18 months before sowing in early Spring.

Can be prone to leafspot, rust, powdery mildew.

Berries are picked when ripe in Autumn.

### Historical

Many historical practices are associated with Hawthorn eg. going 'a Maying' and choosing a "May Queen". It has long medicinal use as a circulatory and digestive tonic.

### Culinary

Hawthorn Jelly is a traditional recipe for a clear jelly/jam made from the haws – the wild hawthorn berries.

#### Ingredients:

1.1kg ripe hawthorn berries

1.2 L water

Sugar (see method for quantity required)

Juice of one lemon

#### Method:

Wash the berries well and remove stalks. Put berries in a pan and cover with water. Bring to boil and simmer for one hour or until the berries have absorbed most of the water.

Pour the berries and their liquid into a strainer lined with muslin cloth.

Do not squeeze the muslin or press the berries.

Allow to drain for 8 hours until mixture has stopped dripping.

Drain off the liquid from the berries and discard the berries.

Add the liquid to a pan adding 400g sugar for every 500ml of liquid.

Heat the mixture gently, add lemon juice, and continue heating until sugar has dissolved.

Then bring the mixture rapidly to the boil and continue cooking until mixture begins to set. When the mixture (now a jelly) is sufficiently "set", allow to cool, and then pour into sterilized jars for storage.

Adapted from Dyfed Lloyd Evans: [www.celtnet.org.uk/recipes/](http://www.celtnet.org.uk/recipes/)