

St. John's Wort

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St. John's Wort

What is St. John's Wort?

St. John's Wort (*Hypericum Perforatum*) is a small plant with bright yellow flowers. Wort is an old English term that means plant. The red spots on the leaves of the plant are symbolic of the blood of St. John after his beheading. The plant is grown worldwide but it grows especially well in parts of Northern California and Southern Oregon (<http://www.doctormurray.com/articles/worteditorial.htm>).

St. John's [Wort](#) has not been well known in the United States until recently. Studies on the medicine have been going on for decades in Europe. German doctors have been prescribing it and the insurance companies have been paying for it. It is available in many health shops in the United States and all across Europe but recently it has been selling out because of its increased popularity. In the United States, manufacturers can't advertise it as a treatment for depression and doctors can't prescribe it because the FDA (Federal Drug Administration) won't allow it. It has to be advertised as a contribution to emotional balance and positive outlook or promoting a sense of balance for people with mild

depression, not severe or major depression. St. John's Wort comes in one of three forms: [liquid](#), capsule, and dried form.

(http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/psychology/health_psychologyStJohn.htm)

What is the purpose of St. John's Wort?

St. John's Wort use for depression, insomnia, and anxiety inspired a group of German doctors in the 1980's to do research on the herb. The findings of their studies brought the group fame in the late 1990's. A number of studies indicate that St. John's is an effective treatment for treating mild-to-moderate depression

(<http://www.mothenature.com/cg/stjohns.asp>).

St. John's is quickly becoming the most popular herbal drug in the United States.

German [physicians](#) prescribed a total of 66 million daily doses in 1994. These German physicians now prescribe St. John's wort an average of 8 times more than Prozac. These doctors claim that St. John's wort produces better results in relieving depression, but the medicine does not have near the amount of side effects as Prozac

(<http://www.doctormurray.com/articles/worteditorial.htm>).

How does St. John's Wort work?

Originally, scientists thought that the reason St. John's worked as an antidepressant was due to a substance called hypericin.

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