

SHATAVARI

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Common name Wild asparagus (E), Shatavar (H)

Sanskrit Shatavari

Latin *Asparagus racemosus – radix (Liliaceae)*

Shatavari can mean 'one hundred roots' (literally 'one hundred below') but is commonly referred to as 'the woman who has a hundred husbands'. As this name suggests it is a renowned tonic for the female reproductive system. It is also a superb anti-inflammatory.

ENERGETICS

Rasa (taste) Bitter, sweet

Virya (action) Cooling

Vipaka (post-digestive effect) Sweet

Guna (quality) Unctuous, heavy

Dosha effect VP-, K+

Dhatu (tissue) All tissues

Srota (channel) Digestive, female reproductive, respiratory

CONSTITUENTS

Alkaloids – asparagamine

Steroidal Glycosides & Saponins – shatavarin, sarasapogenin, diosgenin

Mucilage¹

BIO-MEDICAL ACTION

Demulcent, galactagogue, anti-inflammatory, aphrodisiac, female reproductive tonic, spermatogenic, anti-haemorrhagic, expectorant, adaptogen, immuno modulator, anti-bacterial

INDICATIONS

Gynaecology Shatavari is the foremost female uterine tonic. Primarily used as a menstrual regulator in dysmenorrhoea, menorrhagia and menstrual irregularity. As *pitta dosha* moves in both the blood and the *artavasrotas* the cycle is often disturbed by excess heat. This heat can condense the blood (due to dehydration), cause it to move too quickly (due to its catalytic activity), cause it to overflow (due to its 'rebellious' nature) and cause inflammations (due to its irritating tendency). Its affinity for *shukra dhatu* tonifies female fertility; the unctuous properties increase the reproductive fluids, enhancing both conception and uterine strength. It can be used to help prevent miscarriage. Shatavari is very useful in menopausal symptoms with hot flushes, irritability, irregular memory and dryness.²

Lactation Its nourishing effect on *rasa dhatu* makes it a specific for increasing milk flow and quantity.

GIT Its unctuous, bitter and sweet qualities soothe inflammation of the mucus membranes with high *pitta*; colitis, Crohn's disease, dysentery with bleeding, inflammation and pain. It is specifically active against *Entamoeba histolytica*. For conditions of gastric hyperacidity (*amlapitta*) with sour reflux and burning in the stomach it is a cooling anti-inflammatory. Its demulcent properties are specifically useful for healing bleeding ulcers and gastritis.³

Lungs Where there is inflammation from dryness and heat Shatavari increases moisture. Used in dry cough, sore throat and haemoptysis.

¹ Williamson

² Frawley and Lad

³ Paranjpe, Williamson

Male fertility Whenever there is low sperm count and irregularity consider using Shatavari.⁴

Urine Very useful in dysuria with hot and smelly urine with haematuria.

Anabolic Shatavari's *rasayana* properties increase *mamsa dhatu* building body mass, muscle tissue and nourishing the blood. It nourishes *ojas* and can enhance immunity in the treatment of cancer.⁵

Nerves It nourishes *majja dhatu* and calms the nerves. It specifically nourishes the brain and reduces *vata* disorders; spasms, pain and insomnia.

AYURVEDIC ACTION

Balya Gives strength

Vrishya Aphrodisiac

Vajikarana Enhances sexual appetite

Rasayana Rejuvenative, especially to the female reproductive system

Artava janana Promotes menses

Vajikarana Promotes fertility

Praja sthapana Prevents miscarriage

Ojas vardhanam Increases *ojas*

Stanya janana Nourishes breast milk

Medhya Nervine

Mutravirechana Diuretic

Shukrajanana Promotes sperm production

Shukrashodhana Purifies sperm

Raktapittaghna Alleviates bleeding from heat

Chakushaya Benefits eyesight

Shula prashama Alleviates colic

COMBINATIONS

+ Ashoka, Rose, Turmeric, Mustaka for gynaecological conditions.

+ Manjishta and Ashoka for preventing miscarriages.

+ Ashwagandha as a uterine tonic and for infertility (male and female).

+ Ashwagandha, Kapikacchu, Gokshura, Amalaki for boosting sperm quality and quantity.

+ Fennel, Ajmoda for increased breast milk.

+ Amalaki, Manjishta, Kutki for inflammations in the intestines.

+ Licorice, Vasa, Neem for lung heat and high *pitta* problems.

+ Coriander, Sandalwood, Gokshura for urinary difficulty, pain, bleeding.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Not when there is acute lung congestion , high *kapha*, low digestive fire or high *ama*.

SAFETY

No drug herb interactions are known

DOSAGE

3–30g/day dried or 3–15ml of a 1:3 @ 25% tincture.

NOTES

* Thriving all over tropical India and Asia, it grows a mass of tuberous and juicy roots. It is a thorny perennial with striated leaves.

* Top quality is peeled to become Yellow Shatavari.

⁴ Bhavaprakasha

⁵ Tillotson

- * It is commonly boiled with milk, ghee and digestive spices to increase its tonic properties and assist in the reduction of *pitta*.
- * A major ingredient in Narayana Tail, a massage oil used for high *vata* and muscular weakness with dry skin.