

Hypericum perforatum

Hypericum perforatum, commonly known as St. John's Wort, is a flowering medicinal herb native to Europe and parts of Asia. It has been used for centuries in traditional herbal medicine for mood support, nervous system balance, and minor skin conditions. Today, it remains one of the most widely studied herbal remedies worldwide.

Key facts

- **Scientific name:** *Hypericum perforatum*
- **Common names:** St. John's Wort
- **Family:** Hypericaceae
- **Active compounds:** Hypericin, hyperforin, flavonoids
- **Typical forms:** Capsules, teas, tinctures, oils

Botanical characteristics

Hypericum perforatum is a perennial herb characterized by bright yellow flowers and small leaves containing translucent oil glands. The aerial parts of the plant are harvested during flowering and processed into medicinal extracts and oils.

Traditional and modern uses

Traditionally, St. John's Wort has been used for emotional wellbeing, nervous tension, and wound support. In modern herbal medicine, it is commonly promoted for mild mood disturbances and emotional balance, particularly in Europe.

Mechanism and research

Research suggests that hypericin and hyperforin may influence neurotransmitter pathways involving serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine. Clinical studies have investigated its role in mood support, although findings vary depending on preparation, dosage, and study quality.

Safety and regulation

Hypericum perforatum may interact significantly with many prescription medications by affecting liver enzyme activity, particularly cytochrome P450 systems. Potential interactions include antidepressants, oral contraceptives, anticoagulants, and immunosuppressive medications. Professional medical guidance is strongly recommended before use.

Culinary and supplement context

St. John's Wort is commonly sold as teas, oils, extracts, and dietary supplements. Its popularity within natural wellness markets continues globally, especially in products related to mood and stress support.