

Sceletium

Usage & Benefits of *Sceletium tortuosum* (Kanna)

***Sceletium may assist with:** Emotional Wellness, Mood Enhancement, Anti-Depressant, Anti-Anxiety, Stress Reduction, Cognitive Enhancement, Sustained Concentration, Stopping Smoking, Drug Addiction, Alcoholism, Deeper Sleep, Social Phobia, OCD Treatment, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) / Grey Weather Syndrome, Neuro-Protective, Intimacy Enhancement, Couples Therapy, Pro-Sexual Aphrodisiac, Deeper Sleep, Bodywork, Endurance Athletics, Social Euphoriant, Yoga, Meditation*

Sceletium is one of the most usable and functional herbs for mental and emotional wellness that exists in the world today. It has wide and profoundly efficacious application in many areas, and is a unique botanical treasure.

Emotional Wellness

Sceletium is an excellent broad-spectrum mood enhancing and emotion-mediating herb. It integrates mind, emotion and body and allows for deep bodily and mental relaxation. It calms obsessive thinking, is emotionally grounding and supports free expression of thought, feeling and speech. It is altogether healing on the psyche and the heart, and engenders a profound integration of mind, body and emotion.

Mood Enhancement

There is no better natural mood enhancer than Sceletium – let's just say it! Much more effective than commonly used botanicals such as St. John's Wort, Rhodiola, Ginkgo Biloba, Mucuna, Valerian, Gotu Kola, Kava, Passiflora and L-Theanine etc, which while all usable, do not have the directness and reliability of action that Sceletium does. Sceletium greatly enhances serotonin function in the brain (more than any other herb known) and does so more effectively than L-Tryptophan, 5-HTP and Griffonia (without causing the drowsiness that is often associated with these serotonin precursors). While compounds like L-Phenylalanine and L-Tyrosine cause some increase in circulating dopamine, it is serotonin that has become acknowledged to be the primary mediator of mood and overall good feeling.

Anti-Depressant

Nearly all clinical anti-depressants prescribed these days are of the SSRI-class (Selective Serotonin Re-Uptake Inhibitors) and sometimes of the SDRI-class (Serotonin-Dopamine Re-uptake Inhibitors). Their primary mode of action is to increase serotonin in the brain, and this does of course happen to a degree, but the side-effects, which are very well documented, are universally unpleasant, undesired and best avoided. Sceletium accomplishes its action primarily by being a SRA (a Serotonin Releasing Agent), coupled with a small amount of SSRI activity. Releasing Agents in general have always been found to be more effective, balanced, humanly profound and in harmony with natural neuronal function than Re-Uptake Inhibitors (which are nearly always problematic). In addition, there are none of the harsh side-effects of chemical SSRIs.

Anti-Anxiety

Sceletium is THE model anxiolytic (anti-anxiety agent). Millennia of traditional Kanna usage confirms this, as do the experiences of anyone today who has used Sceletium. Anxiety has multiple associated causes, but a central theme among them is a racing hyperactivity of the mind and a subsequent and consequential hyperactivity of the autonomic nervous system. Sceletium works directly, in an adaptogenic way, to mediate the “pace” of the mind, slowing a racing mind and bringing a calm centeredness to the being. It is unmistakable and anyone who suffers from anxiety readily attests to this.

Stress Reduction

The scourge of modern living... there are few who do not suffer from the stress that comes from information overload, complexity, time scarcity and the necessary multi-tasking we must all engage to survive in the busy world we now live in. A key to managing stress with aplomb is calmness and the ability to be grounded and centered in the midst of the storm of our modern lives. Sceletium, taken at sub-threshold doses, allows us to take a breath and see the world from a more spacious vantage, and thus use what would otherwise be “stressful”, as energy and inspiration.

Cognitive Enhancement

A calm mind is an intelligent mind. When we are relaxed, creativity springs freely and unbidden, memory performs when it is needed and overall cognition is improved. Both mesembrine and (even more strongly so) mesembrenone, key components in Sceletium, are known PDE4 Inhibitors. PDE4 Inhibitors are known to have strongly pro-cognitive (including long-term memory improving), wakefulness-promoting and anti-inflammatory effects.

Sustained Concentration

As was ably demonstrated by the *San* hunters of old, Kanna allows long periods of focused concentration without mental fatigue, and in the case of traditional usage, also allowed the *San* to endure long periods of activity without food or water and without suffering physical fatigue. The careful application of Sceletium to the treatment of ADD and ADHD is clearly indicated here, though the latest cutting-edge research indicates that a dopamine enhancer, such as Mucuna, in conjunction with Sceletium, would do better as a treatment for ADD/ADHD than Sceletium alone.

Stopping Smoking

Kanna has significant benefits for those wishing to stop smoking. Apart from significantly reducing the severity of nicotine withdrawal, it also greatly alleviates the craving and desire to smoke. The greatest challenge, as all those who have tried to stop smoking can attest to, is the tendency to compulsively and obsessively think about smoking. As one of Sceletium’s central effects is to mediate the obsessive tendency of the mind, this quality has been found by many to make the required difference in successfully stopping smoking.

Drug Addiction

For very similar reasons as in the paragraph about stopping smoking above, Sceletium has been found to be highly efficacious in respect of all drug addiction (including tobacco and alcohol).

Again, symptoms of withdrawal are profoundly relieved, particular in opiate and other CNS depressant addiction. Furthermore, mesembrenone, as a significant PDE4 Inhibitor, has powerful neuro-regenerative effects, which is very useful for healing brain trauma caused from excessive use of CNS stimulants such as cocaine, amphetamine, methamphetamine and methcathinone. Additionally, the negative effects of excessive high-dose MDMA usage, which can cause damage to the serotonin receptors in the brain, is healed by regular Sceletium usage (though Sceletium should not be used concurrently with MDxx style drugs).

Alcoholism

Again, for similar reasons as in the Stopping Smoking and Drug Addiction sections above, Sceletium serves as a very good treatment for alcoholism as well as pre-alcoholic behaviours that would tend to lead to full-blown alcohol dependency. In addition to Kanna's various modes of anti-addictive effect, it can also serve as an effective (and safe) replacement for alcohol – indeed it has even been referred to as "*onse droë drank*" (meaning "our dry drink" in certain Afrikaans speaking *Khoi*-descendent cultures in South Africa). A common reason for excessive alcohol use is to quell feelings of anxiety or tension, and Kanna does this much more effectively than alcohol while also being safe to use and non-toxic to the liver.

Deeper Sleep

Aside from increasing melatonin levels as a consequence of enhanced serotonin function, Kanna is simply a profound, if not the most profound, relaxer of body and mind. And this state of psycho-physical relaxation greatly supports falling asleep and remaining asleep. Reports from Kanna users indicate enhanced sleep and better morning function. In addition there is anecdotal evidence of a decrease in both muscle cramps and night sweats.

Social Phobia

Social phobia and anxiety are intimately linked, as social phobia is essentially a particular type of anxiety experienced in social situations. As described in the Anti-Anxiety paragraph above, Sceletium is directly indicated here. The increase in synaptic serotonin associated with Sceletium use engenders a relaxed, open-hearted and socially convivial state, where communication is easy and self-reflexive concern is greatly lessened. In fact, those suffering from social phobia tend to do much more than simply "manage" these situations, they generally find them enjoyable while taking Sceletium. A key point here is that one actually learns from the Sceletium-mediated state that it is naturally possible to enjoy those kinds of social situations, and that one actually has the capacity to be at ease in them. And from that perspective Sceletium serves authentic long-term transformation rather than being simply a palliative treatment.

OCD Treatment

For similar reasons as outlined in the Anti-Anxiety paragraph above, Sceletium has found incredible efficacy in treating Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. By allowing the mind to settle and integrate with the body and heart in a deep way, it grants a centered peace and fundamental sense of acceptance to the one who was otherwise suffering this condition – and this state is essential to non-obsessive and non-compulsive behaviour.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) / Grey Weather Syndrome

Grey Weather Syndrome / SAD affects many people worldwide, especially in the Northern hemisphere, and while the causes are invariably complex, the primary factor is due to low serotonin levels in response to decreased sunlight in winter. And people who spend a lot of time indoors working can have the same issues whether it is summer or winter. Studies have shown that a decrease in sunlight can, in susceptible individuals, cause an increase in the activity of the Serotonin Transporter (SERT) which recycles serotonin and removes it from active synaptic function. In addition, low serotonin can also be associated with low melatonin (due to serotonin metabolizing to melatonin), which both impairs sleep and daytime alertness. As Scelletium is both a Serotonin Releasing Agent (SRA) and Serotonin Re-Uptake Inhibitor (SRI) it greatly increases levels of active serotonin as well as melatonin, and is thus a first choice treatment for these disorders.

Neuro-Protective

As in the Cognitive Enhancement paragraph above, PDE4 Inhibitors also possess strong neuro-protective qualities, protecting the brain from excitotoxic, hypoxic and inflammatory damage. Scelletium is generally protective of our brains and nervous systems from many of the various brain-damaging causes that may be inflicted upon us in our modern lives.

Intimacy Enhancement

Scelletium, especially when used in a single high dose, opens the heart, dissolves emotional armoring, and removes relational fear. And it does so more reliably than any other known medicinal herb or psychoactive botanical. With the natural human trust that is opened and expanded in this state, there is the opportunity for a profound deepening of love, communication and intimacy between lovers.

Couples Therapy

For the same reasons as stated in the Intimacy Enhancement paragraph above, Scelletium taken in a single, but lower dose, would be found to be very useful in a formal therapeutic context, assuming the therapist's skill, professionalism, experience working with people in heightened states of awareness, and of course personal experience with Scelletium.

Pro-Sexual Aphrodisiac

Because Scelletium enhances intimacy as described in the Intimacy Enhancement paragraph above, it will also be found to have a profound and authentic aphrodisiac and pro-sexual effect, and one that is based on emotional responsiveness rather than mere physically generated changes in the body. Bodily relaxation is deepened, tactile sensitivity (for both men and women) is enhanced and men find they can last longer. In fact men who struggle with premature ejaculation find Scelletium to be their greatest ally in this regard. Recent unpublished research is also suggesting that Δ^7 -mesembrenone may additionally function as a mild PDE5 Inhibitor thereby enhancing and strengthening erection and enhancing blood flow in the pelvic area for men and women. Additionally, women who suffer from psychologically-caused dyspareunia or vaginismus (painful intercourse or the inability to allow penetration) will find the deep physical-emotional grounding and opening effects of Scelletium will ease these conditions, and potentially totally transform them, allowing full sexual function and expression.

Deeper Sleep

Aside from increasing melatonin levels as a consequence of enhanced serotonin function, Kanna is simply a profound, if not the most profound, relaxer of body and mind. And this state of psycho-physical relaxation greatly supports falling asleep and remaining asleep. Reports from Kanna users indicate enhanced sleep and better morning function. In addition there is anecdotal evidence of a decrease in both muscle cramps and night sweats.

Bodywork

Sceletium has been noted as an excellent adjunct to various bodywork therapies, including massage, deep tissue work and fascia release therapies such as Rolfing / Structural Integration. Due to Sceletium's softening and opening of the emotional body there is a consequent relaxation of the fascia, which allows greater response to touch and a deeper range of movement as the body transforms. Physical therapists have reported greater ease in accessing deep tension in the body and clients have reported a longer enduring of effects.

Endurance Athletics

The traditional *San* hunter-gatherers, the oldest users of Kanna, made particular use of the herb when engaging in long hunting trips. It allowed them to endure the heat of the Kalahari desert, extremely low levels of hydration, and the long distances that were travelled on foot, often for many days at a time. Kanna also provided a means for them to remain vigilant and calm during long periods of waiting and stalking. In modern endurance sports, Kanna has been found to increase endurance, mitigate muscle cramps, and also provide a gentle analgesic effect which allows elite athletes to safely extend their pain threshold.

Social Euphoriant

Enhancing social interaction is possibly one of Kanna's greatest benefits. When taken at slightly higher doses than are generally used clinically, Sceletium induces an open-hearted euphoria, a profound ease of conversation and a socially gregarious climate altogether. All ancient cultures have traditionally used some kind of drug to enhance tribal cohesion and group bonding. And in the modern Western world we are no different, with alcohol (and sometimes cannabis) being almost universally present when people gather together to socialize or celebrate. The "socializer" drugs (a term coined by Swiss biologist Claude Rifat) are a class that includes [Alcohol](#), [Cannabis](#), [GHB](#), [Kava](#) and [Kanna](#). Their shared characteristics are physical and mental relaxation, humour, emotional catharsis, disinhibition, levity and ease of communication. They are all effective to varying degrees in this regard, with their individual subtleties, nuances and pros and cons in various contexts. We do not propose to compare them here or pass any judgement as to their use – those who are familiar with them invariably are comfortable with their preference and familiar with usage and effects. However we will point out that in terms of potential for emotional depth and profundity of communication, Sceletium is a most excellent tool in our collective "ice-breaking" toolbox.

Yoga

For those involved in yoga practice, whether as advanced students or beginners, Sceletium will be found to be a very useful ally. Because of Sceletium's combined actions of relaxing and releasing the fascia, as well as allowing a more body-centered awareness altogether, yogis will find more presence in their ability to enter into and stably hold asanas. And as the fascia, and therefore the

entire body structure, is softened and opened by Sceletium, the poses that are held will be able to more consistently transform the dynamic structure of the body over time. Depth of breathing is also enhanced by Sceletium, so pranayama practice will be deepened.

Meditation

The challenge of the meditator is not only the busyness of the mind itself, but the tendency for attention to become bound to the stream of thoughts. Sceletium enhances body and breath based awareness. It allows the mind to calm and, most importantly, shifts attention from the mental realm to the domain of body, breath and feeling. By abiding more easefully as the body and more integrated with one's breath, meditation practice is enhanced. Additionally, larger doses of Sceletium have a marked empathogenic effect, leading to deep stillness and open-hearted feeling. By revealing our innate capacity to feel and love more deeply, Sceletium reveals a facet of that central quality of our being to which the practice of meditation is ultimately proceeding. And having this experience is clarifying, aligning and motivating in spiritual terms.