

## Anamu

### Anamu

**Anamu (*Petiveria alliacea*) has a long history in herbal medicine in all of the tropical countries where it grows.** In Brazilian herbal medicine, it is considered an antispasmodic, diuretic, menstrual promoter, stimulant, and sweat promoter. Herbalists and natural health practitioners there use anamu for edema, arthritis, malaria, rheumatism, and poor memory, as a topical analgesic and anti-inflammatory for skin afflictions. Throughout Central America, women use anamu to relieve birthing pains and facilitate easy childbirth as well as to induce abortions. In Guatemalan herbal medicine, the plant is called apacín and a leaf decoction is taken internally for digestive ailments and sluggish digestion, flatulence, and fever. A leaf decoction is also used externally as an analgesic for muscular pain and for skin diseases. Anamu is commonly used in big cities and towns in South and Central America as a natural remedy to treat colds, coughs, influenza, respiratory and pulmonary infections, and cancer, and to support the immune system. In Cuba, herbalists decoct the whole plant and use it to treat cancer and diabetes, and as an anti-inflammatory and abortive.



Over the past quarter of a century modern scientific research has studied anamu intensively. Many biologically active compounds have been discovered in anamu: flavanoids, triterpenes, steroids, and sulphur compounds. The research published on anamu now validates many of the historical uses of this herb. Interestingly, the researchers found that of the 20 compounds isolated from the plant - several of which had never been identified in nature before - some were similar to compounds found in garlic, a plant known to have medicinal properties.

Anamu (*Petiveria alliacea*) is a species of flowering plant in the pokeweed family, that is native to Florida and the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas in the United States, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and tropical South America. Introduced populations occur in Benin and Nigeria. Because the plant is found in so many lands, and so many cultures regard it as medicinal, it is identified by more than the usual number of common names. In Belize the Creole speakers call it Guinea-Hen Roo, in Perú it is Mucura, and in french speaking countries Feuilles Ave and Herbe aux Poules and Peteverie A Odeur Ail. Anamú is the name used in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. Anamu is called Tipi in Brazil, Apacin in Guatemala, and Guine in many other parts of Latin America. In Trinidad it is called Mapiurite and Gully Root. Other names include Apacina, Apazote De Zorro, Aposin, Ave, Aveterinaryte, Calauchin, Chasser Vermine, Congo Root, Douvant-Douvant, Emeruaiuma, Garlic Weed, Guine, Guinea, Guinea Hen Leaf, Hierba De Las Gallinitas, Huevo De Gato, Kojo Root, Kuan, Kudjuruk, Lemtewei, Lemuru, Mal Pouri, Mapurite, Mucura-Caa, Mucuracáa, Ocano, Payche, Pipi, Verbena Hedionda, Verveine Puante, Zorrillo.

Anamu has been widely used to treat an astounding range of medical conditions both in humans and in animals including: sexually-transmitted diseases, antiseptic, arthritis, pain, cancer, womb inflammation, diuretic, anti-

coagulant, cold, snake bite, influenza, colds, hysteria, paralysis, fever, rabies, to treat arrow poison in Brazil and as an abortifacient.

Anamu has been found to contain a large number of biologically active chemicals including benzaldehyde, benzoic acid, benzyl-2-hydroxyethyl-trisulphide, coumarin, isoarborinol, isoarborinol acetate, isoarborinol cinnamate, isothiocyanates, polyphenols, senfol, tannins, and trithiolaniacine.



The research published on anamu reveals that it has a broad range of therapeutic properties, including antileukemic, antitumorous, and anticancerous activities against several types of cancer cells. In a plant-screening program performed at the University of Illinois at Chicago, over 1,400 plant extracts were evaluated for the prevention and treatment of cancer. Anamu was one of only 34 plants identified with active properties against cancer. In an in vitro study by Italian researchers in 1990, water extracts and ethanol extracts of anamu retarded the growth of leukemia cells and several other strains of cancerous tumor cells. Three years later, the researchers followed up with another study, which showed that the same extracts had an effect, killing some of these cancer cells, rather than just retarding their growth. This study indicated that whole herb water extracts of anamu were toxic to leukemia and

lymphoma cancer cells but only inhibited the growth of breast cancer cells. More recently, a study published in 2002 documented an in vitro toxic effect against a liver cancer cell line; another in vitro study in 2001 reported that anamu retarded the growth of brain cancer cells. A German study documenting anamu's activity against brain cancer cells related its actions to the sulfur compounds found in the plant.

In addition to its documented anticancerous properties, anamu has also been found in both in vivo and in vitro studies to be an immunostimulant. It stimulates the immune system to increase its production of lymphocytes and natural killer cells - powerful disease-destroying cells. At the same time, it increases the production of interferon and interleukins - chemicals used by the immune system in fighting cancers and infections.

Anamu's traditional use as a remedy for arthritis and rheumatism has been validated by clinical research confirming its pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory properties. Researchers in Sweden demonstrated its COX-1 inhibitory properties (cyclo-oxigenase-1 inhibitors are a new class of popular and profitable arthritis drugs). Anamu extracts have been found to relieve pain and inflammation even when applied topically to the skin.

Many clinical reports and studies document that anamu shows broad-spectrum antimicrobial property against numerous strains of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and yeast.

The combined phytochemical and pharmaceutical study of *Petiveria alleeaceae* L. (anamú) has shown the existence in the leaves and stems of the plant of a possible hypoglycemic active principle. Extracts from leaves and stem powder were found to produce a decrease of blood sugar concentration of more than 60% one hour after oral administration in male mice.

Today, in South America, anamu is being used for its immune stimulant and anticancerous properties as a support aid for cancer and leukemia patients. It is also being employed in various formulas for its antimicrobial actions against bacteria, viruses, yeast, and fungi, as well as in other formulas supporting immune function.

**Cautions:** Anamu has been found to cause contractions of the uterus that can lead to abortion and miscarriage. As such, pregnant women should not use it.

Anamu contains a low concentration of a blood thinner called coumadin. People with any bleeding disorder like hemophilia or who are on blood-thinning medication should consult their health-care provider before using anamu.



Be sure to try NSP's [Anamu \(100 caps\)](#) from Nature's Sunshine.

### References

<http://www.backyardnature.net/yucatan/anamu.htm>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petiveria\\_alliacea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petiveria_alliacea)  
<http://gardenswithoutborders08.blogspot.com/2008/08/anam-or-guinea-henweed-healing-plant.html>  
<http://www.rain-tree.com/anamu.htm>  
<http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20070813/news/news7.html>

**Yours in Good Health!**

Sincerely,

Chris Ritchason  
Dr. Jack & Verlyn Ritchason, Founders  
The Back to Herbs Team

**Disclaimer:** We do not directly dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of herbs or supplements as a form of treatment for illness. The information found on this Web Site is for educational purposes only to empower people with knowledge to take care of their own health. We disclaim any liability if the reader uses or prescribes any remedies, natural or otherwise, for him/herself or another. Historically all of these herbs & vitamin supplements may nutritionally support the bodies biological systems. Please consult a licensed health professional should a need be indicated.

This information was provided by

***Chuck & Judy Erffit***  
***Natures Better Way***

PO Box 261 - 880 W Dryden Rd., Metamora, MI 48455

[www.naturesbetterway.com](http://www.naturesbetterway.com)

[www.naturesbetterway.my4life.com](http://www.naturesbetterway.my4life.com)

[www.mynsp.com/naturesbetterway](http://www.mynsp.com/naturesbetterway)

1-810-678-3131 [erkfitz@erkfitz.com](mailto:erkfitz@erkfitz.com)