

From our friends at "Back to Herbs"



eFlash



Bee Pollen

Bee pollen has been used to enhance energy, memory, and performance. Proponents of bee pollen offer a wide range of claims regarding its nutritional and healing properties. These include enhancing the immune system, controlling weight, relieving allergy symptoms, increasing strength, improving sexual function, enhancing vitality and stamina, slowing the aging process, and prolonging life. Bee pollen is said to strengthen the immune system through its antioxidant properties. Antioxidants are used to deactivate free radicals in the body. Free radicals are byproducts of oxygen that can damage cells and are linked to many degenerative diseases, especially those



associated with aging. They are also associated with the aging process itself. Antioxidants may block further damage and even reverse much of the cell oxidation already done. Bee pollen is suggested to help counteract the effects of radiation and environmental pollutants that weaken the immune system, supporters say. Bee pollen corrects the deficient or unbalanced nutrition, common in the customs of our present-day civilization of consuming incomplete foods, often with added chemical ingredients, which expose us to physiological problems as various as they are numerous.

Bee pollen is considered a highly nutritious food because it contains a balance of vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, enzymes, and essential amino acids. Avoid confusion with bee venom, honey, and royal jelly. Bees use propolis, a resinous substance, to construct their hives while royal jelly is secreted from the salivary glands of bees.

Traditionally bee pollen has been used for a variety of purposes, including relief of constipation. In Chinese medicine, bee pollen is used for building blood, reducing cravings for sweets and alcohol, as protection from radiation, and a cancer inhibitor. Properties associated with bee pollen include nutrient, diuretic, hemostatic, breaks up stasis, and astringent. Bee pollen is most commonly used traditionally for bleeding (nosebleed, vomiting blood, coughing blood, metrorrhagia, bloody diarrhea, traumatic injuries, etc.), amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, abdominal pain, painful urination, mouth sores, eczema, alcohol intoxication, and rheumatism. Topically it is used for eczema, skin eruptions, and diaper rash and wound healing. It may also relieve premenstrual syndrome and climacteric symptoms associated with menopause.

The use of bee pollen increased during the late 1970s following testimonials by athletes that supplementation increased stamina and improved athletic ability. Although bee pollen has been used in certain cultures for thousands of years, its popularity has become more widespread in recent years due to its potential health benefits. Typically, bee pollen is used as a rejuvenator or a tonic and to assist in recovery from illness. Bee pollen is often used as a pollen and spore antidote during allergy season. It may aid in respiratory complaints such as bronchitis, sinus congestion, and common rhinitis. In the

support of hormonal disorders, bee pollen is thought to balance the endocrine system with specific benefits in menstrual and prostate disorders.

Clinical data regarding safety and efficacy in pregnancy and lactation are lacking. However, use in pregnant rats resulted in fetuses with higher birth weights and decreased death rates, suggesting that bee pollen may be an effective prenatal nutrient.

Bee pollen is a nutritional source for drone bees. It has been described as "nature's perfect food" and is a highly concentrated food source containing a complex supply of quality nutrients. It consists of plant pollens collected by worker bees combined with plant nectar and bee saliva, usually a mixture of pollen species from several different plants. The pollens are packed by the insects into small dust pellets that are then used as a food source for the male drones. Commercially, the pollen is gathered at the entrance of the hive by forcing the bees to enter through a portal partially obstructed with wire mesh that brushes the material off the hind legs into a collection vessel. Because of the increasing popularity of bee pollen as a health food, this means of pollen collection has been supplemented by collection directly from the hives.

Bee pollen preparations often contain mixtures of pollens from diverse types of plants that vary with geographic origin. Bee pollen consists of the microspores of the male reproductive elements of various plant species, including buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench), rape (*Brassica campestris* L.), pine (*Pinus* spp.) and *Typha* spp.

A number of traditional Chinese herbal formulas contain bee pollen. It is rich in vitamins, minerals, trace elements, enzymes, and amino acids, and contains approximately 30% protein, 55% carbohydrate, 1% to 2% fat, and 3% minerals and trace vitamins. Vitamin C concentrations of 3.6% to 5.9% have also been found in some samples. Promotional literature lists up to 100 vitamins, minerals, enzymes, amino acids, antioxidants, and other identified compounds. However, the physiologic importance of many of these components is poorly understood.

Recent studies show promising results regarding pollen's potential. In a placebo-controlled, double blind clinical trial of 60 men, researchers from the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff, found pollen extract was an effective treatment for prostate enlargement and prostatitis. In another study, mice with lung cancer survived almost twice as long when treated with pollen extracts compared with untreated controls. Pollen increased the effectiveness of chemotherapy when given simultaneously. Unlike chemotherapy, pollen didn't attack tumors but stimulated immunity. In a third study, rats were exposed to solvent vapors, simulating industrial exposure. This elevated their liver enzymes, indicating diminished detoxification capabilities. Liver damage was significant in the control rats, damage that was nearly prevented in rats given pollen.

Researchers at the Russian Institute of Apiculture state: "Honeybee pollen is the richest source of vitamins found in nature in a single food. Even if bee pollen had none of its other vital ingredients, its content of rutin alone would justify taking at least a teaspoon daily, if for no other reason than strengthening the capillaries. Pollen is extremely rich in rutin and may have the highest content of any source, plus it provides a high content of the nucleics RNA [ribonucleic acid] and DNA [deoxyribonucleic acid]."

SIDE EFFECTS

Those that have an allergy or sensitivity to bee venom should avoid bee pollen. Bee pollen can cause allergic reactions in some individuals who are sensitive to pollens.



Be sure to try NSP's Bee Pollen (100 caps), Stress-J (100 caps) or Energ-V (100 caps) .

References:

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Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

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