

Date: February 5, 1997

HC 020571

Re: **Gotu Kola Monograph**

Anonymous. *Centella asiatica* (Gotu kola). *American Journal of Natural Medicine*, July/August 1996, Vol. 3, No. 6, pp. 22-25.

Gotu kola (*Centella asiatica*) has been used traditionally as a medicine in India and Indonesia, primarily for its wound healing properties and its ability to relieve leprosy. In a nineteenth century Indian pharmacopeia, it was listed as treatment for skin conditions such as leprosy, lupus, varicose ulcers, eczema, psoriasis, and wounds. It was also used to treat diarrhea, fever, amenorrhea [absence of menses], and female genito-urinary tract diseases. The leaves, shoots and whole plant have also been used medicinally in China.

Gotu kola's constituents of primary pharmacological interest are its triterpenoids, which have been shown to exert a complex set of actions on cells and tissues, particularly connective tissues, participating in the healing process. The herb's clinical applications include treatment of second and third degree burns, cellulite, cirrhosis of the liver, keloids [sharply elevated, irregularly shaped, progressively enlarging scar due to excessive collagen formation] and hypertrophic [enlarged] scars, leprosy, scleroderma [chronic hardening or shrinkage of the connective tissue], varicose veins and venous insufficiency, and wound repair. Gotu kola has also been shown in a clinical trial to significantly increase mental function, demonstrating a mild tranquilizing and anti-anxiety action.

Proprietary formulas of gotu kola are standardized to contain asiaticoside (40%), asiatic acid (29 to 30%), madecassic acid (29-30%), and madecassoside (1-2%). These are available in both Europe and the US, and should be taken at a dosage of 60 to 120 mg a day. Gotu kola is well-tolerated orally; topical application has led to infrequent cases of contact dermatitis. —*Ginger Webb*

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