HERBCLIP

FILE: •**Bugleweed (*Lycopus virginicus*)**
•**Gypsywort (*L. europaeus*)**
•**Thyroid**
•**Hormonal activity**

DATE: December 20, 2001 HC 051571

RE: Monograph on European and American Lycopus (Bugleweed)

Harvey, Ruth. *Lycopus europaeus* L. and *Lycopus virginicus* L.: A Review of Scientific Research. *British Journal of Phytotherapy*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1995/96, pp. 55-65.

Lycopus europaeus (gypsywort), a European native, and *L. virginicus* (bugleweed), a North American native, are members of the mint family (Labiatae). They have a history of use in the treatment of heart palpitations, goiter, hyperthyroidism, and Graves' disease [a form of hyperthyroidism; toxic goiter characterized by diffuse hyperplasia of the thyroid gland]. *L. virginicus* was included in the *US Pharmacopeia* in the late nineteenth century. Since then, a great deal of research, including *in vitro*, *in vivo*, and on humans, has been conducted on these two species, specifically in regards to their antihormonal effects. In most research, the two species are considered together.

One study in humans noted that *Lycopus* extracts inhibit iodine metabolism and thyroxine release in the thyroid. Other research has confirmed its antithyrotropic [thyroid gland inhibiting] activity. *Lycopus* may also exert antigonadotropic, anti-prolactin, and anti-glucagon effects. Research suggests that the phenolic substances, the most active being rosmarinic acid (also present in rosemary and comfrey), in *Lycopus* may be responsible for its antithyrotropic and antigonadotropic activity. Ethanol extracts have been shown to be higher in phenolic substances than aqueous extracts. The ethanolic extracts show good results when administered both orally and by injection.

The *British Herbal Pharmacopoeia* gives the following dosages for *Lycopus*, to be taken three times a day: dried herb: 1-3 g or by infusion; liquid extract (1:1 in 25% alcohol): 1-3 ml; and tincture (1:5 in 45% alcohol): 2-6 ml. In *Herbal Medicine*, Rudolf Fritz Weiss, MD, notes that "very small quantities are all that is required."

The author writes that the antigonadotropic action of *Lycopus* should be further studied for its possible contraceptive effects. *Lycopus* has also been noted for its sedative effects.

Ruth Harvey graduated in 1995 from the School of Phytotherapy in Great Britain. She received a Diploma in Phytotherapy for her work on *Lycopus*.
—*Ginger Webb*