<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Saw Palmetto</th>
<th>Energy</th>
<th>Warm, moist, oily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Serenoa repens</td>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>Pungent, sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Palmae</td>
<td>Part Used</td>
<td>Berries (drupes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name</td>
<td>Dwarf Palmetto</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Yin tonic/genito-urinary antiinflammatory</td>
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</tbody>
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**Location**
- It grows in Florida, coastal Georgia and South Carolina.

**Gathering**
- When berries are black/purple (September-December).

**Cultivation**
- It needs a semitropical climate, sandy soil and full sun.

### Western Classification
- Antiandrogenic activity
- Antiinflammatory
- Diuretic (non-irritating)
- Expectorant
- Immune tonic
- Nutritive
- Yin Tonic (spleen, kidney, lung)

### Triune Classification
- Male Reproductive System +
- Female Reproductive System +
- Immune System +
- Lung +
- Kidney/Bladder 0
- Chinese Kidney +
- Prostate +
- Prostate 0
- Chinese spleen +

### Major Constituents
- Fatty Acids and Sterols:
  - Caproic acid
  - Lauric acid-antiinflammatory
  - Linoleic acid-5-alpha reductase inhibitor
  - Linolenic acid-antiinflammatory
  - Myristic acid-antioxidant
  - Oleic acid-5-alpha reductase inhibitor
  - Palmitic acid-5-alpha reductase inhibitor
  - β-Sitosterol-antiinflammatory
  - Stigmasterol-antiinflammatory
  - Ferulic acid (phenolic)-antiinflammatory
  - Polysaccharides-immune tonic

### Specific Indications
- * Mild to moderate Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH).
- * Qi and yin deficiency with anorexia, weakness, frequent colds and weak lungs.

### Primary Uses
Saw Palmetto is useful for treating stage I or II Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) symptoms. While it is modestly beneficial by itself, it is more effective when combined with Nettle Root, Aromatic Collinsonia and White Sage. A well publicized study suggesting Saw Palmetto is not effective for BPH (Bent, et al, 2006) is disingenuous and needs to be examined in context. In this study men with moderate to severe BPH were given Serenoa, which was not effective. The headlines then read, “Saw Palmetto Does Not Work”. To be accurate, what it should have said is Saw Palmetto is not effective for moderate to severe BPH symptoms. Other studies (Giulianelli, et al, 2011; Bertaccini, et al, 2012; Sinescu, et al, 2011; Hizli & Uygur, 2007; Debruyne, et al, 2004; Pytel, et al, 2004; Giannakopoulos, et al, 2002, etc.) were on men with mild to moderate BPH (stage I or II) and most showed modest but significant reductions of lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS). By changing the parameters of the men studied, a useful medication was then shown to be ineffective. Saw Palmetto is also beneficial for other male and female reproductive issues including “Grumpy Old Man” syndrome (andropausal depression), use it with Ashwagandha, Pulsatilla and Black Cohosh and chronic nonbacterial prostatitis (use it with Hydrangea, Marshmallow and Eryngo). One study also suggested it may inhibit prostatic cancer (Yang, et al, 2007) and in a clinical trial it not only reduced BPH symptoms but also decreased sexual dysfunction (Suter, et al, 2013). Serenoa inhibits aromatase, prolactin, 5-Lipoxygenase, phospholipase A2, and 5-alpha-reductase (mildly) which make it useful for not only BPH but also uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts, pelvic fullness syndrome, deep cystic acne and PCOS. For uterine fibroids or ovarian cysts combine Serenoa with Chaste Tree, Dang Gui, Dan Shen/Salvia miltiorrhiza, Ocotillo or Ligusticum root/Chuan Xiong. For pelvic fullness syndrome, use it with Ocotillo, Tiger Lily or Helonias. It can be effective for treating PCOS combined with Licorice, White Peony and Chaste Tree, along with a low glycemic load diet.

The dried berry in a capsule or tea is an immune reservoir tonic, useful for wasting diseases (cachexia) and qi deficiency with anorexia, fatigue, weak lungs and frequent colds. Saw Palmetto is an excellent lung Qi tonic, it nourishes the yin and can be used for laryngitis, mild asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchial irritation and dry coughs. It can be taken with other yin tonics such as Prince Seng/Tai Zi Shen, Ophiopogon/Mai Men Dong, Chinese Asparagus/Tian Men Dong or Solomon’s Seal.
Serenoa is a soothing urinary tract tonic. It is useful as part of a protocol for treating interstitial cystitis, irritable bladder, urinary tract infections with scalding urine (use it with Corn Silk and Agrimony) and chronic bacterial prostatitis (use it with Pipsissewa, Cleavers, Chinese Coptis or Kava).

**Secondary Uses**

A number of clinical reports suggest that Saw Palmetto may help male pattern balding. It hasn’t done a thing for me and I do not think it is effective for treating this condition.

The literature is rife with “claims” of Saw Palmetto increasing women’s breast size or men’s penis size. Neither of these claims is likely to have any validity.

**Dosage**

Tea (Decoction): 1-2 tsp. dried berry, 12 oz. water, decoct 15-20 minutes, steep 45 minutes, take 4 oz. 3x/day

Tincture (1:2.5), 80% ETOH Dose: 4-5 mL (80-100 gtt.) TID

Standardized extract - 85-95% fatty sterols - 160-320 mg per day

Triune: 1/6 part

**Preparations**

R. Swinburne Clymer, MD's Prostatitis Formula: Saw Palmetto tincture 10-20 gtt., Couch Grass tincture 5-15 gtt., Pipsissewa tincture 2-10 gtt., Pulsatilla tincture 2-4 gtt. Mix in 4 oz. water and take 4 times per day.

**Contraindications & Drug Interactions**

Use cautiously with damp spleen diarrhea or digestive problems, as it can exacerbate these problems.

There have been rare reports of supposed Serenoa-induced hepatotoxicity, neither animal studies or human clinical trials have shown any evidence of liver damage (Singh, et al, 2007).

Concerns about Saw Palmetto masking rising PSA levels have also been disproven (Habib, et al, 2005), nor did Saw Palmetto have any significant effects on CYP1A2, CYP2D6, CYP2E1 or CYP3A4 activity (Gurley, et al, 2004).

**Special Notes**

The berries were traditionally eaten as a food by native people in Florida, they are at best an acquired taste.

**Additional Resources & References**


Winston, D., Saw Palmetto For Men And Women, Storey, North Adams, MA, 1999

Yang, Y., Ikezoe, T., et al, Saw Palmetto Induced Growth Arrest and Apoptosis of Androgen-Dependent Prostate Cancer LNCaP Cells Via Inactivation of STAT 3 and Androgen Receptor Signaling, Int J Oncol, 2007, Sep;31(3):593-600