

Agnus Castus – Hormonal Regulator, Cycle Harmoniser & Women's Moon Herb

Botanical Profile

- Latin Name: *Vitex agnus-castus*
- Alternative Names: Chaste Tree, Monk's Pepper, Chasteberry
- Plant Family: Lamiaceae (Mint family)
- Parts Used: Berries
- Origin: Native to the Mediterranean and Western Asia

Agnus Castus is a time-honoured botanical remedy known for its powerful influence on hormonal balance and menstrual wellbeing. Often revered as a sacred herb of the divine feminine, it supports the pituitary gland in regulating the menstrual cycle and easing reproductive disharmony. At Peridotflow Wellness Centre, we honour Agnus Castus as a moon-aligned herb—trusted to help women and menstruating folk return to inner rhythm, balance, and grace.

Regulates the Menstrual Cycle and Supports Ovulation

Agnus Castus supports the healthy functioning of the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis, gently promoting progesterone production while helping to correct luteal phase deficiency. It is especially helpful in irregular, absent, or delayed menstruation, and supports the return of ovulation in those coming off contraceptives or after periods of stress. Over time, it encourages the restoration of a balanced and natural cycle.

Eases PMS, Mood Swings, and Breast Tenderness

By modulating prolactin levels and supporting hormonal equilibrium, Agnus Castus can significantly reduce symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS). It's particularly beneficial for those who experience breast pain, irritability, low mood, or tearfulness in the days leading up to menstruation. It harmonises emotional and physical cycles in a deeply intuitive way.

Supports Fertility and Post-Pill Hormonal Recovery

Agnus Castus may enhance fertility by supporting ovulation and hormone balance. It is often used as part of natural fertility protocols and in the months following discontinuation of hormonal contraceptives. By encouraging the body to produce its own hormones in rhythm, it allows deeper hormonal resilience to emerge.

Helps with Acne and Skin Breakouts Linked to Hormonal Imbalance

When acne, especially around the jawline and chin, is linked to cyclical hormonal shifts, Agnus Castus may help reduce flare-ups. Its regulatory effect on the endocrine system supports the clearing of hormonally driven inflammation and oil imbalance, often improving skin texture over time.

Offers Gentle Support in Perimenopause and Menopause

While Agnus Castus is most well-known for premenopausal hormone support, it may also benefit those navigating the hormonal shifts of perimenopause. It can offer support for hot flashes, mood changes, irregular cycles, and breast tenderness in the transitional years—especially when used alongside adaptogenic or nervine herbs.

Folklore & History

Known as 'Monk's Pepper,' Agnus Castus was once used in monasteries to subdue sexual desire, though ironically it now supports hormonal vitality. In Ancient Greece, it was sacred to Demeter and associated with feminine wisdom, fertility, and purification. Its name derives from 'chaste' due to its historical use in promoting celibacy, though modern herbalism embraces its role in restoring balance and flow.

Traditional Usage

Traditionally used in tincture or capsule form to regulate the cycle, ease PMS, support fertility, and balance female hormones. Taken long-term (3–6 months or more) to gently reset endocrine rhythms. Best taken first thing in the morning to align with pituitary activity.

Herbal Actions

Hormone Regulator, Endocrine Modulator, Galactagogue (low dose), Emmenagogue, Pituitary Tonic

Energetics & Tissue States

Temperature: Warming to neutral

Moisture: Slightly drying

Tissue States: Stagnant, Atrophic, Deficient

Active Compounds

- Iridoid glycosides (agnuside, aucubin) – hormonal modulation
- Flavonoids – antioxidant and endocrine support

- Essential oils – mild antispasmodic
- Diterpenes – pituitary gland influence

Dosage & Preparation

- Tincture: 1–2 ml once daily on waking (consistency is key)
- Capsules: 250–500 mg dried berry, daily
- Not typically used in teas due to bitter, pungent flavour

Safety & Contraindications

- Not recommended during pregnancy
- Use with caution if taking dopamine-related medications
- May aggravate depression in sensitive individuals—monitor mood closely
- Should not be used alongside hormonal contraceptives (may counteract their effect)

Herbal Pairings

- Shatavari – for moistening, nourishing fertility support
- Ashwagandha – to ease stress-related hormone disruption
- Skullcap or Lemon Balm – for nervous system soothing alongside cycle work
- Dandelion Root – for gentle liver and hormonal detox
- Raspberry Leaf – as a uterine tonic alongside cycle regulation

Peridotflow Perspective

Agnus Castus is a sacred calibrator, whispering the ancient language of hormonal rhythm back to the body. She gently resets the inner moon cycle, restoring vitality, fertility, and trust in one's flow. At Peridotflow, we honour her as an ally in rewilding the hormonal journey—whether in menarche, postpartum, or perimenopause. She works slowly and deeply, reminding us healing has its own timing and season.