

Devil's Claw Benefits – Natural Anti-inflammatory for Joints, Pain & Mobility

Botanical Profile

- Latin Name: *Harpagophytum procumbens*
- Alternative Names: Grapple Plant, Wood Spider, Hook Plant
- Plant Family: Pedaliaceae (Sesame family)
- Parts Used: Tuber (secondary storage roots)
- Origin: Indigenous to southern Africa—especially Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa

Devil's Claw is a powerful anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving herb known for its deep action on the joints, spine, and musculoskeletal system. Its peculiar name reflects the hooked fruit it produces—yet beneath its spiky exterior lies an earthy ally for those living with stiffness, inflammation, and chronic discomfort. At Peridotflow Wellness Centre, we turn to Devil's Claw when the body calls for grounding, cooling, and steady unwinding of deep-rooted tension.

Eases Joint Pain and Improves Mobility

Devil's Claw is most famous for its ability to relieve joint pain, especially in cases of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and spinal degeneration. It has been shown to reduce pain scores and improve range of motion in the hips, knees, and back. Its cooling and anti-inflammatory properties help ease hot, swollen, or stiff joints and support long-term joint resilience when taken regularly.

Reduces Inflammation in Chronic Conditions

This herb works by inhibiting inflammatory pathways, particularly COX-2 enzymes—similar to pharmaceutical NSAIDs but without the same harsh effects on the stomach lining. It can be used to calm systemic inflammation in the musculoskeletal system, digestive tract, or skin, making it an excellent choice for Vata and Pitta imbalances marked by pain, heat, and swelling.

Relieves Back Pain, Sciatica, and Spinal Tension

Devil's Claw is deeply grounding and works well in formulations for spinal pain, slipped discs, nerve compression, and chronic muscular tension in the back. It is often used in protocols for degenerative disc disease, fibromyalgia, or mechanical lower back pain. It combines well with herbs like Solomon's Seal, Skullcap, or Valerian.

Supports Detoxification of Stagnant Tissues

Pain often arises from poor circulation, metabolic stagnation, and accumulation of inflammatory waste in the joints and tissues. Devil's Claw supports lymphatic movement and

mild liver stimulation—helping the body clear what is no longer needed. This makes it a supportive herb in long-term healing of old injuries or slow-repairing tissues.

Aids in Recovery from Chronic Inflammatory Conditions

Whether used after injury, surgery, or flare-ups of chronic pain, Devil's Claw offers support for recovery. Its gentle digestive stimulation, anti-inflammatory power, and tissue-relaxing properties can help the body re-regulate after long periods of stress or inflammation. It can be especially grounding for Vata types who have become disconnected from their physical centre due to ongoing discomfort.

Folklore & History

Devil's Claw has long been used in the traditional medicine of the San and other indigenous groups of southern Africa for fevers, arthritis, and digestive issues. The name comes from the plant's claw-like fruit, but the healing part is the secondary root tuber. It entered European herbal practice in the 20th century, where it quickly became known for its powerful effect on joint pain and rheumatism.

Traditional Usage

Traditionally decocted or powdered and taken internally for arthritis, digestive discomfort, and back pain. The fresh or dried tuber may be boiled for extended periods to extract its full bitterness and strength. Commonly combined with circulatory or relaxant herbs in joint-support formulas.

Herbal Actions

Anti-inflammatory, Analgesic, Bitter, Hepatic, Tonic, Depurative

Energetics & Tissue States

Temperature: Cooling

Moisture: Drying

Tissue States: Hot, Damp, Stagnant, Tense

Active Compounds

- Harpagoside – Anti-inflammatory and analgesic
- Iridoid glycosides – Bitter and anti-inflammatory
- Flavonoids – Antioxidant and protective
- Phytosterols – Tissue-restorative

Dosage & Preparation

- Decoction: 1–2 tsp dried root simmered for 20–30 mins, 1–2x daily
- Tincture: 2–4 ml up to 3x daily
- Capsules: 400–600 mg extract, 1–2x daily
- Powder: Added to smoothies or teas for bitter tonification

Safety & Contraindications

- Avoid in active peptic ulcers due to bitterness
- Use with caution in gallstones or bile duct obstruction
- May interact with blood-thinning or anti-inflammatory drugs
- Not recommended during pregnancy without supervision

Herbal Pairings

- Solomon's Seal – for joint lubrication and spine support
- Skullcap – for nervous system relaxation
- Ginger – for circulation and warming balance
- Meadowsweet – to protect gut lining alongside anti-inflammatories
- Burdock – for deeper detox and inflammatory clearing

Peridotflow Perspective

Devil's Claw is a rooted warrior—it speaks to the deep-seated pain and says, 'Let's move this together.' At Peridotflow, we honour this herb when pain has lingered too long and inflammation has taken hold. It supports not only the release of pain but the re-connection to grounded presence. Devil's Claw reminds us: healing is a slow, strong, steady untangling—and we don't have to do it alone.