

Ginkgo Biloba

Ginkgo Biloba is one of the oldest living tree species, dating back over 300 million years. Individual trees can live for over 1,000 years. Ginkgo Biloba is the best selling herbal product in the world. It is an extract from the green leaves of the Ginkgo tree which is native to Asia, however, is grown worldwide. The active ingredients in the extract are the Ginkgo flavone glycosides, Bilobalide, and terpenelactones including ginkgolides A, B and C. In Asia, ginkgo tree extracts have been used for over 5,000 years to treat cardiovascular problems as well as lung disorders. Recently, American medical researchers have begun studying ginkgo. In fact, there are currently over 3 dozen studies looking at the effects of ginkgo on the human body.

Ginkgo's most powerful effect is on the circulatory system. Ginkgo flavonoids directly dilate the smallest segment of the circulatory system, the micro-capillaries, which increase both blood circulation and oxygen levels in the brain as well as in other critical organ tissues. Ginkgo also prevents platelet aggregation or clumping inside the arterial walls. This increases arterial wall strength and flexibility and decreases the opportunity for the formation of arteriosclerotic plaque. Since ginkgo increases oxygen flow to the brain and enhances the brain's uptake and utilization of glucose it also is being researched for its role in the senility, forgetfulness, headaches and Alzheimer's disease and its role in improving alertness, memory and mental performance.

Related to circulatory improvement, German researchers have also been studying ginkgo as a treatment for atherosclerotic peripheral vascular disease. This disease impairs walking and ginkgo has been shown to help blood flow to the legs allowing people to walk further with far less pain.

Aside from these critical, high profile circulatory effects, ginkgo also increases the body's ability to produce the universal energy molecule adenosine triphosphate (ATP). This can in turn, decrease fatigue and listlessness.

Finally, ginkgo is a highly important antioxidant shown to have a special affinity for scavenging the superoxide radicals. Due to its antioxidant role, ginkgo can increase cellular longevity, protect against pulmonary disease, provide membrane stability, and support ocular structural integrity (i.e., prevent macular degeneration).

There are a variety of different Ginkgo Biloba raw materials available to manufacturers for use in brand name products. The raw materials chosen are a key in the effectiveness of the final product.

Ginkgo leaves should be hand picked to insure that the plant's terpene rich veins are not destroyed. Once harvested, the leaves need to be dried to an extract moisture level to maintain active constituent potencies. After drying the leaves must be stored in temperature and humidity controlled warehouses until the extraction process occurs. Following extraction, there should be a guaranteed potency of a minimum of 24% ginkgo flavone glycosides and 6% total terpenelactones.

