

Expert Herbal Reality Resource

Limeflower

Names

Botanical Name *Tilia cordata* Mill. *T. x europaea* L *T. platyphyllos* Scop

Family: Tiliaceae

Common names: linden, limetree, basswood (Eng)
Linde (Ger), tilleul (Fr), tiglio (Ital), tilo (Sp)

Alternate botanical names: there are around 45 species of lime tree around the world, some of which may be supplied as one of the three accepted species



Description

The limeflower or 'linden' tree is a large, canopy tree that can reach heights of up to 30m. It will naturally grow in pasture, gardens, woodland and meadows and is common throughout Europe, being a native across the temperate northern hemisphere. Its leaves are alternate, petiolate ovate, with a serrate edge and sharp apex.

The parts used in teas and medicines are the creamy white flowers on long stems out of characteristic pale-green lance-shaped leaf-like bracts (a bract is part of a flower that resembles a leaf). The flowers are a creamy white and produce a sweet, light scent reflecting their taste.

Constituents

- flavonoids (herperidin, quercetin, kaempferol, astralagin).
- volatile oils (farnesol)
- saponins
- phenolic acids
- condensed tannins
- mucilage

Traditional use

Limeflowers were most often used in popular health care as a fever-managing remedy, applicable to any member of the family from the very young (even infants) to the very old. They were among the first choices across Europe for the home management of feverish colds and infections, used as a tea to flatten the temperature curve without suppressing the beneficial work of the fever in combating the infection. Limeflowers were also highly prized as home relaxants, used in much the same way chamomile tea, to calm restlessness, irritability, particularly in children and in symptoms of anxiety. It has been used as a specific remedy in Germany for influenza in children.

Traditional actions

Traditional Ayurvedic characteristics are

Rasa (taste) Sweet, pungent
Virya (action) Cooling
Vipaka (post-digestive effect) Sweet
Guna (quality) Light, dry
Dosha effect: reduces excessive *pitta* and *kapha*
Dhatu (tissue) *Rasa*/plasma, *rakta*/ blood, *majja*/nervous
Srotas (channels) *Rasa*/lymphatic, *rakta*/ circulatory, *anna*/digestive, *majja*/nervous, *mano*/mind

Traditional Ayurvedic actions include

Jwaraghna Relieves fevers
Kushtaghna Alleviates skin problems
Medhya Brain tonic, nervine
Mutrala Diuretic
Nidrajanana Induces sleep
Raktadhara Enhances circulation
Shirovirechana Relieves congestion in the head
Sulaprasamana Relieves pain and spasm in the gut

Ayurvedic Indications:

Lovely cooling remedy for pitta and especially for problems associated with *mano*, *rasa* and *raktavahasrotas*. Relieves nervous palpitations and high blood pressure; calms irritability and impatience, lifts the spirits, induces relaxing sleep. Helps to cool heat and inflammation, relieves fevers, arthritis and gout, calms inflammatory skin problems and clears catarrhal congestion associated with excess *kapha*.

What practitioners say

- **Circulation:** Used in hypertension, palpitations, arteriosclerosis and any heart based condition which is exacerbated by stress or anxiety. Modern practice has also seen the potential of limeflowers in the treatment of other disorders of the circulation: varicose veins, phlebitis, migraine and auto-immune attacks on the vessel walls, such as arteritis. It has long been used in England and France as a remedy in migraines and other headaches, cases where a 'soothing' effect on the vessel walls would be reinforced by a background relaxation and spasmolytic effect. The vasodilatory action will also reduce any constrictory tone in peripheral vessels.
- **Nervous:** Used in insomnia, especially among children, for recurrent nightmares, anxiety symptoms such as palpitations, mild depression, and stress-induced migraines.



Evidence

There is no published clinical evidence for the benefits of limeflowers, but authorities like the German Kommission E and ESCOP all support the use of limeflowers in managing colds and fevers.

Safety

Limeflowers are widely judged to be very safe. There is a report implying interference with iron absorption which might make regular use of the tea inadvisable in anaemia; however this effect was significantly less than regular tea and coffee.

Dosage

6-12g per day of dried flowers by infusion