

Horehound, Black

Species (Family)

Ballota nigra L. (Labiatae)

Synonym(s)

Ballota

Part(s) Used

Herb

Pharmacopoeial and Other Monographs

BHP 1996^(G9)

PDR for Herbal Medicines 2nd edition^(G36)

Legal Category (Licensed Products)

Black horehound is not included in the GSL.^(G37)

Constituents^(G49,G64)

Limited chemical information is available for black horehound. Documented constituents include diterpenes (e.g. ballotenol, ballotinone, preleosibirin),⁽¹⁻³⁾ flavonoids, and volatile oil.

Food Use

Black horehound is listed by the Council of Europe as a natural source of food flavouring (category N3). This category indicates that black horehound can be added to foodstuffs in the traditionally accepted manner, although insufficient information is available for an adequate assessment of potential toxicity.^(G16)

Herbal Use

Black horehound is stated to possess anti-emetic, sedative and mild astringent properties. Traditionally, it has been used for nausea, vomiting, nervous dyspepsia, and specifically for vomiting of central origin.^(G7,G64)

Dosage

Dried herb 2–4 g or by infusion three times daily.^(G7)

Liquid extract 1–3 mL (1:1 in 25% alcohol) three times daily.^(G7)

Tincture 1–2 mL (1:10 in 45% alcohol) three times daily.^(G7)

Pharmacological Actions

None documented.

Side-effects, Toxicity

None documented.

Contra-indications, Warnings

None documented.

Pregnancy and lactation Black horehound is reputed to affect the menstrual cycle.^(G30) In view of the lack of phytochemical, pharmacological and toxicity data, the use of black horehound during pregnancy and lactation should be avoided.

Pharmaceutical Comment

Limited phytochemical or pharmacological information is available for black horehound to justify its use as a herbal remedy. In view of the lack of toxicity data, excessive use should be avoided.

References

See also General References G9, G16, G30, G36, G37, G49 and G64.

- 1 Bruno M *et al.* Preleosibirin, a prefuranic labdane diterpene from *Ballota nigra* subsp. *foetida*. *Phytochemistry* 1986; 25: 538–539.
- 2 Savona G *et al.* Structure of ballotinone, a diterpenoid from *Ballota nigra*. *J Chem Soc Perkin Trans 1* 1976; 1607–1609.
- 3 Savona G *et al.* The structure of ballotenol, a new diterpenoid from *Ballota nigra*. *J Chem Soc Perkin Trans 1* 1977; 497–499.