

***COLEUS FORSKOHLII, A SUPER TONIC HERB**

By Mike King

Coleus Forskohlii is a perennial plant and member of the mint family. It was first discovered in the lower elevations of India, but grows wild on the mountain slopes of Nepal, India, and Thailand. Today it is found throughout the world and is even used as an ornamental plant. Coleus Forskohlii is cultivated in India for use as a condiment and has been used for centuries as a pickle or food spice in East Indian diets. Since ancient times Coleus Forskohlii has been used in Hindu and Ayurvedic traditional medicine for the treatment of skin rashes, asthma, bronchitis, insomnia, epilepsy, hypertension, painful urination, colic, eczema, congestive heart failure, and angina. The ancient Sanskrit texts even record Coleus as a medicinal herb to treat heart and lung diseases, convulsions, intestinal spasms and insomnia.

Although there are more than 20 known active ingredients, such as coleonols and diterpenoids in the Coleus herb, Forskolin is the chief active component and is chemically classified as a diterpene. Forskolin was discovered in 1974 and named after the Finish botanist Forskal. Forskolin found in the root of Coleus Forskohlii is the primary constituent of clinical studies and scientific interest. Forskolin has the ability to activate the enzyme adenylate cyclase. Adenylate cyclase then increases cyclic adenosine monophosphate (Cyclic AMP).

Interestingly, Cyclic AMP is involved in a myriad of processes and critical events within all cells of the human body such as lowering the body's output of histamine and leukotriene. This is good. Cyclic AMP is involved in the alteration of cellular membrane transport proteins. Cyclic AMP and the chemicals it activates comprise a second messenger system that is responsible for carrying out the complex and powerful effects of hormones in the body. So you have a very powerful yet natural and balanced herb that turns on and enhances mechanisms in the body to help the body heal itself.

Scientists have studied Coleus for over twenty years and have found an abundance of benefits with some even more exciting research on the horizon. As usual, the positive historical, anecdotal and common sense usages of powerful herbal and nutritional substances are being proven by clinical studies and scientific data. A new patented weight loss extract from Coleus called Forslean has been clinically proven to burn fat, promote weight loss and maintain lean body mass. Amazingly Coleus has been shown to increase the skins natural resistance to burning and stimulating a natural tanning response when applied. In studies at the University of Kentucky in 2006, scientists have shown forskolin to enhance melanin production. Maybe, someday we may be able to get a safe natural tan without having to get in the sun or under UV lights and avoid all the skin damage.

Forskolin may be the first alternative therapy for glaucoma as cAMP is involved in the cellular energy used to move fluid out of the eye. An Indian pharmaceutical company is currently engaged in clinical trials of a forskolin eye drop. This is a liquid form and extract of the root. Never put the herbal preparations or the root directly in the eye as it can cause a burning and itching irritation. One of the overlooked benefits of Coleus is its stimulation of digestive enzymes, which aids digestion, and assimilation of food. Forskolin has actually

been shown to increase nutrient absorption in the small intestine. Due to the possible increase in stomach acid, individuals with ulcers should consult their qualified health care practitioner before using Forskolin.

Some of the more common uses of *Coleus forskohlii* are to relax the arteries and smooth muscles to help reduce blood pressure, enhance the immune system and aid in hypothyroidism by increasing thyroid hormone production. *Coleus* also naturally “thins” the blood by its platelet aggregation inhibiting effects, which aids in cardiovascular disorders. Anyone taking cardiovascular drugs should consult their qualified healthcare practitioner before adding the natural *Coleus* herb to their regimen. *Coleus* aids in reducing eczema and psoriasis by normalizing the cAMP to cGMP ratio. Cells divide about 1000 times faster than normal when the cAMP levels become lower than another cell regulating substance called cGMP. Asthma and allergies are also characterized by low levels of cAMP and are relieved with higher levels. Many asthma medications increase cAMP by inhibiting the enzymes that cause its breakdown. *Coleus* naturally increases the cAMP. One should consult their qualified healthcare professional before combining their asthma drugs with this natural herb.

Research has shown *Coleus* to be a very potent inhibitor of tumors in mice and may someday be proven to be used in humans to prevent or inhibit tumor metastases. *Coleus* is believed to aid in depression as it may improve neurotransmitter function, although clinical trials using *Coleus* to treat depression have not been done. In early 2007 researchers at Duke University reported that forskolin was an aid in bladder infections by helping to push the bacteria out of the bladder. *Coleus* is very safe and effective and there are no known toxicity or adverse reactions in people. Many combination remedies utilize *Coleus* in their formulas and it is also quite effective on its own. Although *Coleus* has been used in many studies in injectable, inhaled aerosolized and topical forms *Coleus* is generally taken orally in pill form. Quality extracts are standardized to 10% forskolin, with recommended dosages ranging from 100mg to 250mg twice daily.

**This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.*