

*Selenicereus grandiflorus*

## Night-Blooming Cactus

### Indications

Used for weak, irregular heart action, tachycardia, palpitations, aortic regurgitation, and angina.

### Mechanism of Action

The amines in night-blooming cactus are credited with cardiogenic effects. The amino acid tyramine is found in the plant and credited with a positive inotropic action.<sup>1</sup> *Selenicereus* can stimulate the heart and dilate peripheral vessels.<sup>2</sup> The flowers contain betacyanins and flavonoglycosides, at least eight flavonoids, tyramine (0.3% in dry matter), and hordenine.

### Evidence-Based Research

There have been no clinical trials or modern scientific investigations on night-blooming cactus as yet. Case reports may be found by Dr. AO Jones from 1890.

### Safety in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

There are no investigations published regarding the use of night-blooming cactus in pregnancy or lactation.

### General Safety

The plant is considered safe when used in small doses in the traditional manner. Mouse data report the LD<sub>50</sub> to be 10,700 mg/kg body weight orally and 145 mg/kg body weight subcutaneously.<sup>5,3</sup>

### Dosage

Low doses of night-blooming cactus, 10–100 mg QD to BID are clinically effective.

### Traditional Uses

*Cereus* or *Cactus grandiflorus* (now classified as *Selenicereus grandiflorus*) is a folkloric medicine used as a heart tonic for blood pressure regulation and the management of the symptoms of congestive heart failure.<sup>4,5</sup> Night-blooming cactus is specific for weak, irregular heart action; aortic regurgitation; and angina, especially when associated with depression and lethargy. The early American folkloric notion was that night-blooming cactus was a restorative remedy for the heart, capable of improving function via nutritional and tonic effects.

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> **Planta Med.** 1982;44(1):36–40. *New cardioactive drugs II, detection and isolation of cardiotonic amines with ionpair-HPLC.* Wagner H, Grevel J.
- <sup>2</sup> **PDR for Herbal Medicines.** 1st ed. Montvale, NJ: Medical Economics Company, Inc.; 1998. Gruenwald J, Brendler T, Jaenicke C.
- <sup>3</sup> **Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products.** 1999. EMEA/MRL/601/99-Final April. *Selenicereus grandiflorus summary report.* European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products, Veterinary Medicines Evaluation Unit.
- <sup>4</sup> **Minerva Med.** 1955;46(103):1975–6. *A new drug compound with Cereus grandiflorus Mill., a Mexican cactus with cardiotonic action.* ROBIOLA PF.
- <sup>5</sup> **Br Med J.** 1890;1(1515):70–1. *Cactus Grandiflorus in Some Forms of Heart Disease.* Jones AO.

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