



The Rhodiola Revolution: Transform Your Health with the Herbal Breakthrough of the 21st Century

By Richard P. Brown, Patricia L. Gerbarg, Barbara Graham

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From 2 leading physicians, one the co-author of *Stop Depression Now*, comes this groundbreaking book that introduces Americans to the amazing healing powers of Rhodiola rosea. With unprecedented access to more than 30 years of compelling scientific research, including top-secret studies from the former Soviet Union, Dr. Richard Brown and Dr. Patricia Gerbarg offer exclusive proof of rhodiola's remarkable ability to:

- Help melt away extra pounds
- Maximize energy
- Fight stress and aging
- Sharpen memory and concentration
- Enhance sexual function and physical performance
- Protect against heart disease and cancer

The Rhodiola Revolution also offers fascinating insight into Rhodiola rosea's rich and intriguing history, as well as concise directions on using the herb for maximum medicinal effect. It's the resource of choice for anyone who wants to use rhodiola to optimize their health and vitality.

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Editorial Review

Review

When this book manuscript passed over my desk, I grabbed it out from all the myriad articles and reviews on which I am always working. A few years ago, I had wanted to find out more about SAM-e, a substance that could help people with problems as distinct as depression and arthritis. The first book that I encountered hardly impressed me-it seemed merely undocumented “gushing” over the miraculous substance, and I ended it unpersuaded, as well as undereducated about SAM-e.

Then I encountered Dr. Richard Brown’s book: SAM-e (with Teodoro Bottiglieri Ph.D. and Carol Colman.) The book was so accessible, I found myself finishing it in a couple of days-then going back to research further some of the intriguing scientific studies it cited. What an anomaly: a book both readable and scholarly! Now I was persuaded enough to recommend SAM-e to my patients-and even try it myself for arthritis (a very bad thing for an aging amateur flying trapeze artist)--and with excellent results. Now SAM-e and Rhodiola are my daily companions!

Going over the pre-publication manuscript, I found that The Rhodiola Revolution is everything that earlier book was, and even moreso. I suggest the improvement may be due to Brown’s being partnered in the writing with his remarkable wife, Dr. Patricia Gerbarg. Pat perfected her writing skills over the years by helping to make Brown’s many scholarly and technical papers eminently readable! (My wife Robin and I have published three books together, and when the synergy works, it can be awesome.)

These two physicians, in my opinion, are just what our stressed-out twenty-first century needs. As you read their own personal stories, woven in with those of their patients healed through Rhodiola, you have no doubt that they have compassionate hearts, as well as very competent professional minds. The stories, including Pat’s own struggle with the debilitating aftermath of Lyme disease-helped by Rhodiola-are believeable, personal, and engaging. The authors point out that clinical evidence does not carry the same weight as placebo-controlled scientific studies; but they provide plenty of those as well, and in ways that do not bore the reader. There is no lack of substance at all in this book, and yet it flows easily from topic to topic.

Prepare yourself for an education as you encounter the Rhodiola lore these two scholar-physicians have assembled. Beginning with the “herb of invincibility” that allows the ancient Greek hero Jason to overcome fire-breathing bulls, and fierce warriors, we are taken through some very credible ethnobotanical and historical sources that show us that this little-known herb has worked its wonders for many centuries-for those wise enough to employ it! These include the residents of rugged Siberia, and of the Caucasian Georgian area, where people still walk over mountains and shovel snow off roofs at 100, and sometimes live to 130, years of age.

Rhodiola grows in sub-arctic climates and at high altitudes. The herb’s coping with its own stressful existence, the authors tell us, is exactly what fills it with adaptogenic phytochemicals that can help experimentally stressed-out laboratory animals-not to mention us humans. It is no wonder that during the “cold war,” Former Soviet Union scientists were told to keep the herb’s wonder-working properties a guarded secret. The Soviet Union wanted their own Olympic athletes, astronauts, and soldiers, with its invisible aid, to have the edge over others.

We are provided very convincing evidence that the reddish, rose-fragrant sap from the plant, and the teas brewed from it, improve stamina, decrease fatigue, even calm the emotions under fatiguing conditions requiring extreme concentration-such as manning the Mir space station! It was Dr. Nikoalai, Lazarev, we are told, who identified a class of herbs referred to as “kingly” in the ancient world. It was he who suggested the term adaptogen for those herbs which increased stamina, while helping overcome fatigue, improved resistance to a spectrum of diseases, toxins, and other traumas, and enhanced longevity. (While at the same

time having no toxicity, and minimal or no side effects.) The herb should stimulate the underaroused, and calm the overwrought, not an easy task for any pharmaceutical. Most preparations either excite or calm--but not both. Of 158 herbal folk remedies studied, Rhodiola emerged at the top in its efficacy and versatility. (p 56.-57.)

While able to enhance physical processes such as metabolism, and boost the immune system, Rhodiola does not neglect the brain and nervous system in its effect, helping with attention deficit and hyperactivity in youngsters, depression and anxiety in most populations, and age-associated impairments in the elderly. Dr. Brown has also used the herb effectively with illnesses like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. The authors make no claim that any of the herbs can arrest progressive neurodegenerative disease, but that the adaptogenic action assists the afflicted person better to cope with symptoms, and function far longer than they would ordinarily have been able. In combination with other herbs, and pharmaceuticals, the authors have even used Rhodiola to help with the after-effects of head trauma and stroke-which can leave their victims almost incapacitated.

I should mention that because the authors take such a fundamentally balanced approach, even the miraculous-seeming results they present are believable. Where indicated, they show Rhodiola can be combined synergistically with other herbs, with conventional prescription drugs (albeit in much smaller doses-which reduces the annoyance of side-effects), or with other therapies such as biofeedback or neurofeedback, meditation, or even the vigorous Sadarshan Kriya Yoga breathing exercises-in which Brown is a certified instructor. They mention repeatedly that Rhodiola works best only if integrated into a balanced lifestyle: taken along with proper diet, sleep, exercise, and a positive attitude. Their approach is so thoroughly reasonable that it is hard to find fault with any of the--amazing seeming, some might say-claims for what Rhodiola might accomplish for a whole spectrum of maladies from which a contemporary person might suffer.

As a former college professor, I appreciate the amount of time Brown and Gerbarg give to a systematic elucidation of the science and physiology undergirding the action of Rhodiola. They provide a clear and detailed explanations of the excitatory HPAA (hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis), and the GAS, the general stress-adaptation syndrome of Selye), for example. They provide detailed explanations for how heart-rate variability may be a strong indicator of health (something I already knew about as a certified teacher of the HeartMath method), and how exquisitely and sensitively the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the ANS need to be balanced-one of Rhodiola's special actions. These physiological details are woven so artfully into the general account of how the herb works, that the reader may not notice that he is getting a decent medical or psychophysiological education, along with information on how to take Rosavin, what to expect, and how to gauge the results. (These technical areas are handled so clearly, the material does not seem as difficult as it might be.)

One compelling story is how the authors' friend, Dr. Zakir Ramazanoff, serving his time in the Russian army in mountainous Afghanistan, first used Rhodiola to help cope with battle fatigue:

"During the winter of 1980 his comrade Sergei-like many of the soldiers-received a holiday box from home. While most of the boxes overflowed with beautiful fruits and other treats, Sergei's contained a bunch of ugly roots.."

When Zakir asked "what the hell they were," Sergei told him it was Rhodiola, and that though ugly, it smelled like a rose, and made a wonderful tea. Ramazanoff noticed that himself and the other soldiers who drank the tea were "better able to hike through deep snow over high mountain passes, carrying full gear, AK-47's and gas masks. And they did it on 4 hours sleep a night." (p. 146-147)

Dr. Ramazanoff forgot about the marvelous tea after the war, until he began to develop the awful symptoms of PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder) known to returning warriors everywhere who participate in the horrors of war. (Depression, mood-swings, hypervigilance, insomnia, nightmares, flashbacks, and panic attacks among them.) During a time when Ramazanoff was almost crippled by symptoms, he accepted a lecture invitation in Siberia, where the herb was known to grow wild. He got some, and began to drink the tea regularly. Within a month he both had more energy and was sleeping better. "Within about two months

the depression went away completely. By then I was no longer overreacting to things, as the images of war had stopped running through my head." He entered into a very productive phase, and published 10 scientific papers in one year, which led to an invitation to come to the US as the guest of the National Academy of Sciences (Ibid.)

Rhodiola seems even to help DNA repair itself, a factor that makes it anti-carcinogenic. (It inhibits the out-of-control mutations that lead to cancer, as well as enhancing the effectiveness of chemotherapy.) Best of all it seems to aid with recovery from any invasive therapy that stresses the patient's resources, and leaves him or her weak and vulnerable.

Throughout this book there is not only a careful balance and structure, but detailed instructions as to how to take the herb, and for what conditions, how to estimate its efficacy, and how to integrate it holistically into a healthy lifestyle. The instructions include something that should be present with every pharmaceutical-how to evaluate the right dose for your own unique constitution, how to gauge its side-effects, if any, even what times of the day to t...

From the Inside Flap

Employing sources as far-ranging as Greek mythology, ethnobotany, and the hidden monographs of Russian cold-war scientists, as well as responsible modern medical research, Dr.s Brown and Gerbarg have written a tour-de-force of a book on the healing plant Rhodiola Rosea. The reader is not only carried along effortlessly and elegantly through Brown and Gerbarg's accessible prose, but led to the inescapable conviction that this adaptogenic herb definitely enhances quality of life! In fact, after reading it, you probably won't want to wait to try Rhodiola-for everything from chronic fatigue to depression, to enhanced immune response, to generic revitalization in a sometimes tiresome world, to optimal performance (as demonstrated by the studies on astronauts and elite athletes.)

This book offers healing modalities for the body, mind and spirit in an age in which our personal resources are so over-spent that we need reliable ways to replenish them. The authors show that "Rosavin," or Rhodiola Rosea, is almost a candidate for the "Panacea" (heal-all) of the ancient Greeks, or the Golden Pill of Immortality of the Chinese sages. How can a heretofore little-known plant-substance do all these things? You will have to read the book to find out how adaptogens really fills in the gaps in our physical and energetic functioning. In our challenging world and time, we need all the help we can get to cope with the stresses that come our way every day. This book shows us that if you neglect to try Rosavin, you may be missing a really important ally!

From the Back Cover

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--Stephen Larsen, Ph.D. is Psychology Professor Emeritus (SUNY), and director of Stone Mountain Center for Psychotherapy, Biofeedback and Neurofeedback in the Hudson Valley of New York. He is the author of seven books currently in print, including, with his wife Robin, "A Fire in the Mind," the Life of Joseph Campbell, and The Fashioning of Angels: Partnership as Spiritual Practice.

Users Review

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Cindy Mattis:

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