

MINT, INTOXICATING



Lagochilus inebrians

Family: Labiatae

Names: Asian Mint, Turkmenistanian menth, Turkistanian Mint, Turkestan Mint, Uzbekistan Mint

Description: A small shrub of the dry steppes of Turkestan. It is a narrow endemic species of the Uzbekistan flora, especially spread in the Samarkand region. The flowers are hermaphrodite

Cultivation: It comes from a sunny and fairly arid region of the world with a continental climate and so it is likely to require a very sunny position in a well-drained dry soil. The plant prefers light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils and requires well-drained soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It cannot grow in the shade. It can tolerate drought. Sow the seed in a greenhouse in the spring. Prick out the seedlings when they are large enough to handle and grow them on in the greenhouse for at least their first winter. Plant them out in late spring or early summer and consider giving them some protection from winter rain. The leaves are gathered in October and toasted.

History: The scientific name, *Lagochilus inebrians* comes from the Greek “Lagos” which means a hair and “Cheilos” which means a lip. “Inebrians” means intoxicating. The plant has long been used for its intoxicating and sedative properties by Tajik, Tartar, Turkoman, and Uzbek tribesman. It is taken as a tea. A crystalline compound isolated from the plant and named lagochiline has proved to be aditerpene. Maximum quantities of lagochilinus accumulate in plants is in the phase of flowering and during fruit production (May-July).

Constituents: Crystalline compound isolated from the plant and named lagochiline has proved to be aditerpene. Unidentified polyhydric alcohol.

Properties: Tranquilizer, intoxicant, mild hallucinogen, Antispasmodic; Hemostatic; Hypotensive; Sedative.

Medicinal Uses: Valued as a folk medicine and included in the 8th edition of the Russian pharmacopoeia, it is used to treat skin disease, to help check hemorrhages, and to provide sedation for nervous disorders. 10-15 g dried leaves and flowers are boiled with sugar and honey to make a tea. sometimes mixed with stems, fruits or toasted leaves. Honey and sugar are often added to reduce their bitterness. Drying and storage increase their aromatic fragrance. The plant reaches its peak when it's in flowering stage, so be careful of *Lagochilus* that is offered without flower pods and leaves. This is a very stemmy plant, but the entire plant is reportedly active.

High doses can be quite intoxicating as its common name suggests. In smaller doses it is used to treat medical problems such as hypertonic illness, diathesis, glaucoma, stomach ulcer and duodenal gut problems. Traditionally to treat such ailments, 10gm of dried plant material are ground up and added to 200ml of boiling water for about 10 minutes. It is then allowed to cool at room temperature and strained. One to two tablespoons of the liquid are drunk 3 to 5 times daily.

References:

Plants for a Future Database

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