

VELVET BEAN (*Macuna Prudients*) (20% L-dopa extract)



Velvet bean has a long history of traditional use in Brazil and India as an aphrodisiac. Clinical studies in India have validated that the plant does indeed have aphrodisiac activity.

Velvet bean is an annual climbing vine that grows 3-18 m in height. It is indigenous to tropical regions, especially Africa, India, and the West Indies. Its flowers are white to dark purple and hang in long clusters. The plant also produces clusters of pods which contain seeds known as mucuna beans. The seed pods are covered with reddish-orange hairs that are readily dislodged and can cause intense irritation to the skin. The species name "pruriens" (from the Latin, "itching sensation") refers to

the results to be had from contact with the seed pod hairs.

The seeds of velvet bean are high in protein, carbohydrates, lipids, fiber, and minerals. They are also rich in novel alkaloids, saponins, and sterols. The seeds of all mucuna species contain a high concentration of L-dopa; velvet bean seeds contain 7-10% L-dopa. Concentrations of serotonin also have been found in the pod, leaf and fruit.

Velvet bean has been gaining in popularity over the last few years in the natural products market-especially the sports nutrition industry. With its documented ability to increase testosterone and stimulate growth hormone (thereby increasing muscle mass), several companies have launched new products using mucuna beans, including several which are standardized to the L-dopa content. It is also showing up as an ingredient in various weight loss, libido, brain/memory, anti-aging, and body builder formulas.

Velvet bean is a powerful plant with many biological actions.