



## spotlight on herbs

### Herb May Help Many Men

(NAPSA)—They may be reluctant to admit it, but approximately half of all American men over the age of 50 have benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), a condition marked by an enlarged prostate. As common a part of aging as gray hair, BPH is an uncomfortable, annoying condition that wakes sufferers several times during the night with an urgent need to urinate. Although not exactly a romantic condition, sufferers may find relief in an herb traditionally used as an aphrodisiac.

Researchers have discovered that saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), an herb derived from the ripe, dark berries of a palm tree found in Florida, can help increase urine flow, decrease the frequency of urination and reduce discomfort associated with BPH. Traditionally used as a tonic for the male reproductive system, a remedy for respiratory complaints and urinary conditions, saw palmetto has proven effective in treating symptoms of BPH in at least 18 studies, including double-blind studies conducted on more than 1,000 patients.

A three-year, randomized trial involving 309 men, for example, showed that saw palmetto was associated with a significant increase in urinary flow and a 50 percent decrease in urine leakage. In comparison, study subjects using the prescription drug finasteride experienced significantly higher adverse side effects.

In addition, 11 percent of participants discontinued taking the prescription drug because of adverse



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side effects, while only 1.8 percent stopped using saw palmetto.

Approved in Germany for use in reducing urinary problems associated with BPH stages I and II, saw palmetto is fast gaining an audience of middle-aged men in the United States, where sales have reached \$44 million in the year 2000 in mainstream food, drug and mass market retail stores.

Saw palmetto is currently available as a supplement at most drug or health food stores. For men diagnosed with early stage BPH, the recommended dosage of saw palmetto is 320 mg per day of the extract. Men should consult their physician for a proper diagnosis of BPH before taking saw palmetto. Saw palmetto has been shown to be very safe and minor side effects include occasional stomach upset.

*This information has been produced by the American Botanical Council (ABC), a non-profit research and educational organization in Austin, Texas. For more scientific and technical information on saw palmetto and other herb information, contact ABC at [www.herbalgram.org](http://www.herbalgram.org).*