

## Evaluation of the Effects of Pelargonium sidoides

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The South African geranium (Pelargonium sidoides), also known as the black geranium or Cape pelargonium, is an herb long used in South African traditional medicine. The root of the plant is typically distilled into an extract and used in cough and cold remedies to alleviate symptoms and reduce the duration of illness. P. sidoides should not be confused with P. graveolens (rose geranium) commonly used to make essential oils for aromatherapy, flavorings, and perfume manufacturing

### Health Benefits

Most of the research related to pelargonium is limited to test tube studies. In this capacity, P. sidoides extracts are known to neutralize certain bacteria and viruses. Whether the same effect can be achieved by ingesting a plant extract remains uncertain. The current evidence is mixed at best.

### Colds and Sinusitis

For a 2013 review of studies published in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, researchers analyzed previously published research and concluded that P. sidoides may decrease the duration of a cold or sinus infection. Despite these findings, the authors acceded that the quality of the studies was low. In another review published in Academic Pediatrics in 2018, scientists evaluated 11 studies investigating the effectiveness of Echinacea, pelargonium, and other herbal medicines in treating respiratory tract infections in kids. While Echinacea (one of the most popular herbal remedies) failed to provide any relief, pelargonium demonstrated "moderate evidence for efficacy" in treating uncomplicated respiratory infections.

### Acute Bronchitis and Pelargonium:

Pelargonium may also help relieve the symptoms of bronchitis, suggests a 2013 review of studies from Germany. As with the previous studies, there was some evidence of a beneficial effect, but the results were largely skewed by the poor quality of the research.

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### Possible Side Effects

The safety of pelargonium remedies is largely untested. Commonly cited side effects include stomach upset, nausea, heartburn, or worsening respiratory symptoms.

Pelargonium contains a substance known as coumarin that acts as an anticoagulant (blood thinner). Because of this, you should avoid taking pelargonium with prescription anticoagulants like warfarin as this could lead to excessive bleeding. For the same reason, you should stop taking pelargonium at least two weeks before surgery or a dental procedure. Pelargonium should also be used with caution in people with autoimmune diseases like psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and autoimmune hepatitis, according to the European Medicines. Doing so may activate the antibodies that trigger autoimmune symptoms.

Most types of geranium are edible, and the African geranium is no exception. The flowers have a fragrant, slightly peppery flavor, while the leaves have a pleasantly sour, grassy taste. When it comes to medicinal use, it is the root of the South African geranium that is believed to be beneficial rather than the stems, leaves, or blossoms.