An ancient Thai “miracle” herb reveals itself to be a real-life fountain of youth

by Alicia Potee

“In life, you find yourself where you’re supposed to be. There’s always a reason.”

That’s how my conversation with Dr. Sandy Schwartz (you can call him Dr. Sandy) began. And if your interest is piqued, it should be. That initial statement would set the tone for one of the most extraordinary conversations I’ve ever had during my time here at the Health Sciences Institute.

I called Dr. Sandy to learn more about an obscure herb called *Pueraria mirifica*, a serendipitous discovery that he made shortly after deciding to drop anchor in Bangkok, Thailand. And when asked how he ended up so far from his native New York City, he confidently proclaimed that he was fated to collide with this ancient plant.

The first half of its moniker (also called PM for short) is simply the Latin term for what is locally called kudzu—a genus of green plants native to Southeast Asia. But it’s the second half that warrants the lion’s share of your attention.

The direct translation of *mirifica* is “miracle-maker.” And when I heard what this herb could do, I decided that the name couldn’t be more appropriate. For centuries, PM has been working magic that (until now, at least) most of us have only seen in big-budget Hollywood films—or in our absolute wildest dreams.

Imagine having a full head of thick, dark hair well into your 80s—no Clairol or expensive procedures necessary. Imagine your wrinkles and sagging skin vanishing, leaving firm, taut, youthful skin in their place. Imagine staving off the devastating effects of menopause, so that you’ll never suffer another sleepless night riddled with hot flashes again.

And if all that isn’t compelling enough, imagine being able to combat breast cancer, ovarian cancer, cervical cancer and prostate complications—all with this single “miraculous” herb.

If you don’t believe me, just take a look at the numerous published studies that have been performed on PM. Even better, ask the virile, active, and anything-but-elderly Thai villagers who have consumed variations of this plant every day for generations.

Or you could ask Dr. Sandy, like I did. As the natural health pioneer who’s made it his mission to put this herb on the Western end of the map, he’ll tell you that *Pueraria mirifica* certainly lives up to its name.

An anti-aging powerhouse that’s less toxic than water

The first recorded account of PM dates all the way back to 14th century Thailand, where the highest order of monks in the Northern Kingdom would receive tonics crafted from the herb as gifts from local inhabitants. Today, you can still read the ancient palm leaves that are inscribed with the plant’s numerous (and incredible) capabilities, which were translated into modern Thai by scholars in the 1930s.

“If aging men take this medicine

(continued on page 2)
**miracle herb**

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[they] will become strong like a young man,” the text professes—adding that “the ingredient in the medicine is very easy to find, but the specification of the right plant is very difficult.” As it turns out, there are 13 different species of “kudzu” in Thailand. But only one of them—Pueraria mirifica—has the astounding power to reverse the many effects of aging.

That’s because PM has sole bragging rights to a unique compound called miroestrol. It’s nearly identical in molecular structure to estriol, one of the three main estrogens produced by the human body in both genders. But more importantly, you won’t find another compound with more potent estrogenic activity anywhere in nature.

Analysis has shown that miroestrol—and its precursor deoxymiroestrol—has approximately 3,000 times the estrogenic activity of soy isoflavones and is more than 100 times more powerful than red clover, two of the most popular alternatives for natural menopause relief today. But as Dr. Sandy explained to me, this particular phytoestrogen doesn’t work in quite the same way. In fact, it’s far safer.

PM doesn’t simply mimic estrogen in the body the way that other therapies do, whether bi-identical or not. Instead, the herb (much like the human byproduct it resembles) acts on estrogen receptors. In more clear terms, it acts as a balancing agent: When levels of estrogen are too high, PM will tie up receptors to weaken the hormone’s effects—when levels are low, the herb exerts the necessary estrogenic activity without actually increasing the amount of estrogen in your body.

As a result, your hormones are modulated and signs of aging linked to your body’s numerous estrogen-receptors (whether it’s menopausal symptoms, wrinkles, balding, or graying hair) are halted or reversed. And without any risk of toxicity, either.

On the LD50 test (which measures the dosage that would kill laboratory animals after 14 days, expressed in weight of material per kilogram of body weight), simple water scores a 16. Relative to this, dried PM root scores a more toxic 7—but when the root is administered in the form of a standardized extract, the score raises to 40, causing no animal deaths at all.

In short: It’s less toxic than water.

**Night sweats stopped in as little as six days**

Just as important as PM’s safety, though, is that it actually works. Fortunately, several studies suggest that it can effectively relieve several of the many symptoms of menopause.

One study showed that PM improved vascular function in ovarietomized rabbits, showing the herb’s promise as a heart-protective for menopausal women. Another demonstrated PM’s ability to prevent bone loss in rat models. And just as many human trials show that these results carry over to women as well.

A larger Phase II trial was conducted in 2004, in which researchers evaluated the symptoms of 37 peri-menopausal women (including hot flashes and night sweats). Of the 37 trial subjects, 20 were randomly assigned a dose of 50 mg of PM per day—the other 17 received a dose of 100 mg. The results were positive—and began to show as
Benefits that reach far beyond menopause

In total, the studies around PM have been mixed, with some demonstrating the herb’s great potential, and others suggesting it may come at a price. Dr. Sandy is quick to say that the latter research simply needs to be more thorough. What could look like a trigger for potentially dangerous cell division on the surface would reveal itself to be increasing cancer-fighting cells upon closer inspection, he argues.

The Thai Ministry of Health enthusiastically supported this same conclusion in a 2001 public declaration, citing clinical research that proves PM’s safety—and its promise in the search for new cancer treatments. But for now, the jury—on paper, at least—still appears to be out.

What’s certain, though, is the mountain of epidemiological evidence behind PM’s powers, in the form of centuries of use by Thai men and women. Dr. Sandy detailed many stories to me: In one particularly memorable account he described an 82-year-old woman whose daily consumption of PM kept her hair naturally jet black, and her body as spry as a woman decades her junior. Amazingly, she still had the energy she needed to chase after her grandchildren.

Another local man (also in his 80s) seemed confused when asked how often he arose from sleep at night to urinate. To him—and all of the other male villagers who had been eating PM root every day for years—disturbances of this nature were unheard of. Dr. Sandy has even seen his own hair restored and wrinkles fade—after all, men experience side effects from estrogen imbalances, too, like balding, lower sexual performance, and more porous bones.

But the younger population can benefit from PM, too, he told me—with the prevalence of hormones in our food supply, a natural estrogen adaptogen like this one can be crucial at any age. Last, but not least, Dr. Sandy didn’t fail to mention several LA Lakers cheerleaders who have seen excellent results from his PM formulation for breast enhancement—perhaps a less urgent, but equally astounding “perk” of the product.

To his mind, Pueraria mirifica is nothing short of a fountain of youth—and the possibilities, he says, are vast. Even now, research is in the works that will investigate the herb’s potential, not just against menopausal discomfort and cosmetic aging, but also against prostate concerns, osteoporosis, and possibly even Alzheimer’s. But in the meantime, the herb’s availability is still limited, and the American market may not quite be ready to embrace it. Still, there are a few scant sources that have begun to open the door.

One of these is Solgar, who introduced a product called PM PhytoGen Complex in December. It includes a standardized extract of Pueraria mirifica with B₁₂, folic acid, and biotin to help manage the symptoms of perimenopause—like night sweats, insomnia, headaches, and fatigue.

You can find details on how to order this product—and be among the first on this side of the Atlantic to benefit from this breakthrough herb—in the Members Source Directory. Meanwhile, stay tuned—we’ll be sure to keep following the inevitable growth of what just might end up being the hottest ingredient to hit the natural health scene in decades.
Maybe you’ve already made the switch to natural deodorant. If so, you’ve taken a smart step. And if not, you should make the switch today, because not doing so could cost you your life.

Aside from their irritation they can cause your skin on a daily basis, the chemicals and preservatives used in popular deodorants and antiperspirants have been linked to cancer, Alzheimer’s, and kidney failure. You’ve probably already heard a little bit about these dangers—and that’s probably why you’re using or looking for a natural alternative now.

But there’s one mistake that you can’t afford to make—and that’s to assume that all natural products (especially deodorants and antiperspirants) are really as natural as they claim to be. While there are many so-called “natural” personal care products on the market these days, a closer look often reveals that they’re just as hazardous as the big names they’re trying to replace.

When I learned about Detox Deodorant (a product with a straightforward name that speaks for itself) I realized right away how crucial it was for you to learn about it. Not only does it live up to its promise of having the most natural ingredients available, but it can also help to draw out the deadly toxins that have been accumulating in your body—whether you knew they were there or not.

Before I get into what makes Detox Deodorant so unique, though, let me take a moment to explain exactly why you should take your brand-name deodorant or antiperspirant of choice and toss it in the trash immediately.

**Your drugstore deodorant could be killing you**

The cosmetics industry is a dangerous one. While the FDA launches witch hunt after witch hunt against supplement companies all over the country, the bigwigs responsible for spinning out the products that you use on your skin every day operate in a veritable wild west of manufacturing practices. Here, the cheapest and easiest-to-use ingredients rule—regardless of the cost to consumers or the environment.

Inevitably, the vast majority of popular beauty and hygiene products—many of which you, your children, or your grandchildren have been using for years—are riddled with irritating toxins and chemical carcinogens. And among these, deodorants and antiperspirants have received a large part of the otherwise nonexistent negative press.

Antiperspirants plug your sweat pores in order to keep your armpits dry—something you might consider a hazard in itself, since sweating is your body’s natural way of detoxifying itself. But adding insult to injury is the ingredient used to produce this unnatural blockage: aluminum salts. The studies linking the use of aluminum-containing products like this to various forms of disease—specifically, Alzheimer’s—are numerous.

But lowering this toxic risk isn’t as simple as switching from an antiperspirant to a deodorant. While deodorants don’t use aluminum salts to block perspiration (the action of deodorant is primarily antibacterial) most of them do contain ingredients called parabens, a preservative that mimics estrogen in the human body.

Among the most notable studies on the link between parabens and cancer appeared in the Journal of Applied Toxicology in 2004. In examining tissue from 20 different human breast tumors, 18 of them were found to contain intact parabens. Since then, even more studies have surfaced linking the preservative with breast cancer, both in the human body and in-vitro.

Nevertheless, the medical and research community can’t seem to agree on whether or not ingredients in these deodorants and antiperspirants—whether they’re aluminum salts or parabens—are actually dan-
dangerous. There are just as many studies that show that this link has little or no statistical significance—meaning that, for now at least, manufacturers are free to include them in any product they choose.

Be that as it may, I can’t imagine that you want to wait until the link has actually been “proven” to take whatever steps necessary to protect yourself from the threat posed by these products. And since you’ll even find parabens lurking in a few of the most popular health-food-store brands, you’re going to want to settle on a product that is what it claims to be. And this brings me right back to Detox Deodorant.

Not a single synthetic ingredient—just as nature intended

Detox Deodorant is manufactured by Herbalix Restoratives, an ecologically minded company whose facility is located directly on the Pacific Northwest’s Puget Sound. Every facet of their business is steeped in a deep respect for the environment—right down to the organic vegetables and herbs they grow for their products on the premises.

The company’s namesake was a novel tincture developed by Dr. David Maline, a diabetic neurosurgeon whose chemically sensitive skin had suffered from the years of harsh antibacterial scrubs he had used in hospitals. Over time, he developed a complex blend of over 60 herbs, which successfully controlled his painful outbreaks—and which would later become the staple ingredient in all of Herbalix’s formulas, including Detox Deodorant.

Botanicals hailing from Chinese, East Indian, and Native American traditions—with origins both earthbound and aquatic—comprise this blend. But it serves another purpose aside from simply soothing inflamed and irritated skin—laboratory evaluations have also proven the tincture’s effective preservative capabilities. The benefit of this is that Herbalix Restoratives does not require any type of synthetic preservative system in any of their products—meaning that Detox Deodorant is 100 percent paraben-free.

And there are a lot of other toxic additions that you won’t find in Detox Deodorant: petroleum, metals (that includes aluminum), emulsifiers, phthalates, propylene, dyes, fillers, or any other synthetic ingredients. Even their manufacturing facilities are completely free of plastics to ensure clean processing and a pristine product—right down to the recycled, leach-free packaging.

Detox Deodorant also doesn’t contain any refined, bleached, or deodorized (RBD) oils. (These are the chemically processed ingredients that take colors and odors out of products—yes, even that unscented deodorant is courtesy of a chemical masking agent.) Instead, Detox Deodorant uses a base of coconut, sweet almond, and extra virgin olive oils.

As a result, all of the product’s herbs and botanicals retain their natural form, and most importantly their natural skin-soothing properties.

Banish years of toxic buildup—in your sleep

You might still be wondering what sets Detox Deodorant apart from all of the other (but admittedly few) purely natural deodor-
ants available on the market. Well, one look at the package will explain it all: This deodorant is meant to be worn overnight. And that’s an indication you’re not likely to find on any of the boxes lining the shelves of your local drugstore.

As you sleep, your body goes through its own restorative detox process—and the process of sweating out toxins is an essential step in repairing the damage that is done throughout the day. This holds especially true for the underarms, one of your body’s primary points of expulsion. And the prolonged use of traditional deodorants and antiperspirants, which block the pores and introduce foreign chemicals into your body, make the need for detoxification even greater.

That’s why, in addition to their patented blend of botanicals, developers at Herbalix added three key detoxifying ingredients into the mix:

- **Olive leaf**, an anti-inflammatory detoxifying herb with especially potent antibacterial, anti-viral, and anti-fungal properties
- **Coriander seeds**, a strong antibacterial that’s also rich in vitamin C
- **Kelp powder**, a mineral-rich ingredient that also acts as a powerful natural filtering agent

When I contacted the company, analysis of residue samples was underway—and while they couldn’t disclose complete results, I was told that Detox Deodorant was proving to be especially effective at drawing out aluminum. In fact, you can expect results within a couple of days to a week of use—and you may initially find that your skin breaks out slightly. This is normal, and will pass once the detoxification process is complete.

And in case you’re concerned about how a concoction like this could possibly look and smell, don’t be—it looks much like other typical natural deodorants, with a pleasantly sweet and herby aroma. But be careful: This product *can* stain your clothes (another reason why it’s not a preferred choice for daytime use). For a product you can wear daily, Herbalix offers several other deodorants, which you can safely use in conjunction with their Detox Deodorant.

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**21st century editions of panelist’s best-selling nutrition bibles now available**

It’s no secret to HSI members that you are what you eat—and I’m sure you would agree that when it comes to powerful natural cures, there’s no better resource than the food that you put into your body.

So when HSI panelist Dr. Elson Haas told us that he was releasing revised and updated versions of his blockbuster books *Staying Healthy with Nutrition*, *Staying Healthy with the Seasons*, and *The New Detox Diet*, we knew that you would want to hear about it. Each of these titles boasts the latest in cutting-edge nutritional information from one of the leading authorities in eating for wellness today.

In addition to comprehensive details on every aspect of nourishment for good health and disease prevention, Dr. Haas’ latest edition of *Staying Healthy with Nutrition* features newly expanded and up-to-date chapters on lifestyle modification, the latest on nutritional supplements, and the newest advances in fighting burgeoning health concerns like fatigue, obesity, heart disease, and cancer. The result is an encyclopedia-sized reference of crucial nutritional information suitable for health professionals, students, and at-home readers alike.

*Staying Healthy with the Seasons* is an up-to-date integrated medicine handbook that teaches you how to achieve optimal health by keeping your body in sync with the changing seasons through dietary cleansing and mind-body integration. Drawing from the fundamental principles of Chinese medicine, Dr. Haas guides you through ways to maximize your well-being and fight off illness all year long.

Finally, the updated edition of his best-selling *The New Detox Diet* presents the same timeless guidelines to ridding your body of sugar, alcohol, nicotine, and other dangerous toxins—and also includes new easy and delicious recipes to help you nourish yourself for a cleaner, healthier life.

The updated editions of these natural health classics are available now at an exclusive discount offered to HSI members only. Check the Members Source Directory for ordering details.

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Citation available upon request and on HSI website
This powerful plant extract is your first line of defense against dust mites

by Jenny Thompson

(From the HSI e-Alert 6/19/07)

About 300 years ago, Anton van Leeuwenhoek, the inventor of the microscope, peered into the eyepiece of his invention and discovered a previously invisible population of creatures that live among us: dust mites.

Dust mites aren’t invisible, of course—they’re just undetectable to the naked eye. Good thing. Because if you’ve ever seen a photo of a dust mite, the realization that your bedding, clothes, curtains, upholstered furniture, carpets, and stuffed animals are teeming with hundreds of thousands of them is unsettling at best.

For most of us, thorough and frequent cleaning—along with making a conscious decision to just not think about them—is the only defense needed against dust mites. But others are not so lucky. Dust mites come in right behind pollen as the second most common cause of allergic reactions. A protein contained in dust mite feces and skin sheddings can prompt reactions that range from the mild (itchy nose) to the extreme (severe asthma).

For many people who are sensitive to dust mites, a powdered plant extract may be the only defense they need.

Dust in the wind

In previous e-Alerts I’ve told you about several trials that have tested a remarkable product called Nasaleze.

Nasaleze is a completely organic powdered plant extract that creates a gel when it comes into contact with moisture. When Nasaleze is sniffed into the nostrils, the gel that’s naturally created acts as a mucous substitute for allergy sufferers who lack the natural mucous that filters air in the nasal passages. In the absence of mucous, allergens make contact with the sinuses and lungs, which triggers sneezing and other unpleasant reactions.

Last week, the newest Nasaleze study was presented by J.C. Emberlin and R.A. Lewis at the European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden. Professors Emberlin and Lewis oversee the UK National Pollen and Aerobiology Research Unit.

Here’s the study profile in a nutshell:

• Researchers recruited 15 adults diagnosed with persistent allergic rhinitis due to dust mite allergy
• In the study’s cross-over design, each subject participated in a placebo phase in which they sniffed a lactose powder, and an intervention phase (conducted at least seven days apart from the placebo phase) in which they sniffed Nasaleze
• All subjects were symptom-free at baseline
• After receiving the placebo or Nasaleze sniffs, each subject was given a small puff of homogenized dust into each nostril
• Dust used in the trial contained specific concentrations of the house dust mite allergens Der p1 and Der f1
• Measures for nasal secretions, sneezing, etc., were taken at 5 minutes, then every 15 minutes for the next hour, followed by

(continued on page 8)

And another thing...

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to keep their eyelids from shutting, making them functionally blind or nearly blind. Italian researchers uncovered the coffee connection when they compared coffee intake in 166 PLB patients to a healthy control group.

...Suffer from depression? Connect these dots… Dot One: Depressive symptoms have been shown to be lower among people whose intake of omega-3 fatty acids closely equals intake of omega-6 fatty acids (which are abundant in processed foods).

Dot Two: Cod liver oil is rich in omega-3 fatty acids.

Dot Three: A new study from Norway shows that people who consume cod liver oil are 30 percent less likely to experience depressive symptoms compared to those who don’t use the oil.

And, in case you didn’t see it in the e-Alert…

...Here’s something you don’t hear too often: To stay healthy, you should gain a little weight. But that doesn’t go for everyone, of course. California researchers compared body mass index (BMI) and mortality rates for more than 13,000 subjects over the age of 80 living in a retirement community. Data was collected over a three-year period, and again for another year one year later. Results showed that mortality rates were generally lower among subjects with BMI numbers in the overweight range.

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And another thing...
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compared to subjects with numbers in the normal range.

...Blueberries may contain two potent anti-cancer agents. In a new USDA study, pterostilbene (an antioxidant compound found in blueberries) inhibited inflammation and significantly blocked the development of precancerous lesions in the colons of rats. Pterostilbene has also been shown to lower blood glucose levels. In one study where it was compared to metformin (the drug most often prescribed for type 2 diabetes), pterostilbene lowered plasma glucose levels in rats with high blood sugar by more than 40 percent.

...Can a high intake of omega-3 fatty acids help manage blood pressure? According to a new study, the answer is yes—it can help a little. But a little goes a long way when it comes to blood pressure. Researchers at Chicago's Northwestern University compared blood pressure readings to dietary habits in more than 4,600 men and women over the age of 40. When results were adjusted to account for 17 different variables that affect blood pressure (such as weight, exercise habits, age, etc.), the Northwestern team found that subjects whose diets supplied a good intake of omega-3 fatty acids tended to have slightly lower blood pressure compared to subjects with low omega-3 intake.

To your good health,
Jenny Thompson, Director
Health Sciences Institute

Nasaleze
(continued from page 7)

30 minute intervals for four hours, and again at six hours and 24 hours
• Results showed that sneezing, itchy nose, and runny nose were significantly reduced when using Nasaleze
• Eosinophil cationic protein (ECP—a marker for allergic inflammation) was also significantly reduced in nasal secretions when Nasaleze was in use
• No adverse reactions were reported

Stubborn tenants
For people who are allergic to dust mites, Nasaleze might provide a life-changing solution because it's impossible to completely rid a house of these microscopic creatures.

According to a Clemson University fact sheet, dust mites thrive in humidity, so dehumidifiers may provide some relief. But bed fibers and carpet fibers actually have their own humid microclimates that are only mildly affected by the humidity of the room. Insecticides also have no lasting effect on core populations of dust mites.

Constant cleaning of bedding and upholstery is the best way to control dust mites. For those who are most sensitive, removal of carpeting, curtains, stuffed toys, and upholstered furniture may be necessary. Mattresses, box springs, and pillows may also need to be enclosed in dust-proof covers.

Meanwhile, we'll be hearing more about Nasaleze later in the year when a new study from the University of Helsinki will report on the results of Nasaleze as a preventive for the common cold. To learn more about Nasaleze—including where you can buy it for yourself—visit www.nasaleze.com.

Sources available upon request and on HSI website

MEMBER SOURCE DIRECTORY

Solgar PM PhytoGen Complex, The Vitamin Shoppe, Ph. (866)293-3367; www.vitaminshoppe.com. One bottle of 60 tablets costs US$25.00 plus shipping.

Detox Deodorant, Herbalix Restoratives, Ph. (866)387-4222; www.herbalix.com. One 2.5 oz stick costs US$15.00 plus shipping.

To order Dr. Haas' books, contact the publisher, Celestial Arts/Tenspeed Press at (800)841-2665, ext 1, or send an email to order@tenspeed.com. (Redemption code: HSB) You can also order through the website, www.tenspeed.com. (Click on Books and enter redemption code at checkout.) HSI members receive 20% off the list price. After the discount, The New Detox Diet and Staying Healthy with the Seasons cost US$16.95 each. The 1000-page Staying Healthy with Nutrition costs US$39.95. Dr. Haas’ seasonal cookbook, entitled A Cookbook for All Seasons (US$16.95) is also available. For more information about Dr. Haas, his work, and his books, please see www.elsonhaas.com.

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