

Rhodiola Rosea: The Ultimate Power Herb

From Terry:

This week, I am very pleased to have author and herbal expert Chris Kilham report on the amazing properties of the adaptogenic herb, rhodiola. I have known Chris for many years, and respect him as a leading authority in plant medicines. Whether he is traveling in the wilds of northern China, as he did to study this herb, or the deserts of Mongolia, or the jungles of the Amazon, Chris develops deep connections to the local communities. He advocates for fair trade and social justice in every region he explores for new natural medicines. CNN called him "The Indiana Jones of Natural Medicine" and I think that is a fair description. Chris has been featured in the New York Times, on MSNBC, and most recently in many segments on the healing powers of herbs with Dr. Manny Alvarez, on FOX News. Thank you, Chris, for your insights into one of my personal favorites—rhodiola.

KEY WORDS

Rhodiola rosea, energy, stamina, strength, Chris Kilham, adaptogen, depression, stress, fatigue, weakness, Medicine Hunter, natural medicine, erectile dysfunction, sports performance, amenorrhea, athletic, memory, golden root, mood

A Special Report By Chris Kilham, Medicine Hunter

Almost every herbalist has a favorite medicinal plant. Mine is unquestionably *Rhodiola rosea*. That plant has reached out to me, and I have not only consumed it in various forms and in a broad number of potions, but have also studied its science and previously investigated the plant in Siberia. I have a strong affinity for *Rhodiola rosea*, and believe that

use of standardized extracts of *Rhodiola rosea* could radically enhance people's mental and physical health, and prevent many individuals from pursuing the use of potentially harmful psychiatric drugs.



Recently I had the opportunity to observe the harvesting and trading of wild *Rhodiola rosea* in the Tian Shan mountain range of Xinjiang Autonomous Region.

My traveling partners included two medicinal plant scientists and two videographers. Disparate others joined us on various stages of our journey. To reach our destination, we flew from Shanghai along China's southeast, to the country's extreme far northwest, into the city of Urumqui, which lies on the ancient Asian trading route, The Silk Road.



From this post west of Mongolia, we rode further west still for a couple of days, along the remote Borohora Shan mountain range, to

To your good health,
Terry... Naturally



the small, dusty city of Yining, a quaint outpost of Turkish-descendent Uigur culture near the border of Kazakhstan. At an outdoor barbeque we sat drinking the regional fermented wheat beverage *kvaas*, and eating thick flat bread with heavy swipes of local butter.

In Yining we connected with a couple of herbal traders who drove us for several hours out into the beginnings of the vast Tian Shan



range, a sprawling mountain region with snow-capped peaks, unexplored verdant valleys, and a treasure-trove of medicinal plants, including *Rhodiola rosea*. We passed vast herds of sheep, nomadic herders with camels, Yurts

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on hillsides, picnics, and children playing. For a long time we traveled a rutted and tortuous construction road for a natural gas pipeline whose source originates at about 10,000 feet altitude in the Tian Shan. From the gas pipeline construction camp, we hiked far up onto precariously steep mountainsides. There, scattered along the steep slopes we came upon several clusters of harvesters digging wild *Rhodiola rosea* root. We had come a long way to see this for ourselves.



To understand a medicinal plant fully, I like to see as many parts of its chain of trade as possible. Visiting harvesters of *Rhodiola rosea* root in the Tian Shan range was a dream come true. It also afforded me the chance to see one of the most productive areas of wild *Rhodiola* harvesting at present. I discovered to my surprise that in that area *Rhodiola rosea* is super-abundant. Every few inches you find another plant. There may be millions of tons of *Rhodiola rosea* in the Tian Shan range, but most of it remains inaccessible. Thus nature has for now put limits on the amount of wild *Rhodiola* that can be harvested in that region.

I recall how hunters I met in Siberia prepared *Rhodiola*. They stuffed fresh root into a bottle, filled the bottle with vodka, and waited a couple of weeks until the vodka was red. Then they would drink a small shot every day. This simple method of water and alcohol extraction

is highly effective. Several of the Altay hunters with whom I spoke said that *Rhodiola* made their minds very strong. This claim holds up nicely under scientific scrutiny. In the brain, *Rhodiola* extract helps to improve various parameters of brain function including attention, memory, thought formation, calculating, evaluating, planning, and overall learning. When you take *Rhodiola rosea*, you experience this quickening of mental functions.

After spending several hours with harvesters, our group traveled a couple of hours down onto the plains north of the Tian Shan, to meet with buyers of *Rhodiola*. The same harvesters we saw in the mountains would eventually arrive on motorcycles with sacks of *Rhodiola* roots strapped to the back seats.



A good digger could bring down as much as 50 kilos of fresh root in a day. I dubbed these men the "Rhodiola Cowboys," for the way they rode in to make a deal.

Over the course of a couple of hours, I witnessed and photographed China's most remote *Rhodiola* trade, while thoroughly enjoying the company of the various people I met. Like so many medicinal plants in trade, *Rhodiola* plays an important role in local and regional economies. In the case of the harvesters in the Tian Shan region, they told me that they could earn a year's living in two months of very hard harvesting. For only two months, the snow is receded enough for the harvesters to work. Ten months of the year, the area is blanketed in snow. In that area, *Rhodiola* provides many people with income.

Valued highly since the days of the first Chinese emperor, *Rhodiola rosea* is a first-rate adaptogen. By definition, this means that *Rhodiola* demonstrates extraordinary safety, offers broad and diverse benefits to body and mind, and specifically helps the user to adapt better to any and all forms of physical and mental stress. This is one of the hallmark experiences of taking *Rhodiola*. When you do, you feel less stress. Things don't bother you as much. You possess greater resources to move through challenging times. It is quite remarkable.

To meet the demands and pressures of life in today's fast-paced, high stress world, *Rhodiola* appears ideal. In human studies using extracts of the root, *Rhodiola* fights fatigue, combats stress, and possesses both antioxidant and anticancer properties. *Rhodiola* protects body and mind against oxygen deprivation, enhances overall immune function, and promotes healthy sexual function in men and women. According to published science, these activities are largely attributed to a group of pharmacologically active compounds in the root called rosavins. I personally have used *Rhodiola* almost every day for many

years, and I still marvel at how good the plant makes me feel.

Rhodiola also imparts real physical power. In various human studies, Rhodiola improved strength, endurance, stamina, physical work capacity, recovery time from exertion, motor coordination, and cardiovascular measurements. Rhodiola extract decreases fatigue and relieves exhaustion. This makes Rhodiola extract a superior sports performance aid. Extract of the root also helped users to reduce work-related errors.

As if the benefits described so far were insufficient, Rhodiola also improves aspects of sexual health. In one study of women with amenorrhea (lack of normal menstrual cycles), Rhodiola helped a majority of women to regain proper healthy menstrual regularity. In another study of 35 middle-aged men with erectile dysfunction, 25 improved significantly after taking an extract of Rhodiola.

You don't have to travel to the ends of the earth to enjoy the benefits of *Rhodiola rosea*. This is one of the remarkable things about the times in which we live. The harvesters I met in a remote corner of Asia thrive because people in other parts of the world are using *Rhodiola rosea* for health and wellness. Thanks to its rich benefits and ever-expanding body of glowing science, Rhodiola continues to increase in popularity for all the right reasons. The majority of human studies show the best results when *Rhodiola rosea* extract is taken between 200-600 milligrams daily, standardized to approximately 2% rosavin, or a total of 5% of the total group of rosavins.

Rhodiola rosea offers a dynamic health experience for the herbal user. If you take it, you will feel it. Rhodiola is in my estimation the

broadest, most remarkable feel-good botanical in nature's pharmacy. This herb has the power to revolutionize people's experience of their health, and can be an effective gateway



botanical. If people use a good quality *Rhodiola rosea* and experience positive results, they will then feel much greater confidence in trying other herbal remedies. TM

Chris Kilham recommends this formula:

Proprietary Formula 450 mg
Rhodiola (*Rhodiola rosea*) Root Extract standardized to contain >15% rosavins, Eleuthero (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) Root Extract standardized to contain >0.8% eleutherosides, Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) standardized to contain >2.5% withanolides, Schisandra (*Schisandra chinensis*) Extract standardized to contain >0.9% schisandrins

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