



Jamaican Dogwood – The Deep Nervine & Pain Ally

Botanical Profile

- Latin Name: *Piscidia piscipula*
- Alternative Names: Fish Poison Tree, West Indian Dogwood
- Plant Family: Fabaceae (Legume family)
- Parts Used: Bark
- Origin: Native to the Caribbean, Central America, and southern Florida

Jamaican Dogwood is a powerful herbal ally for pain, nervous system overwhelm, and deep physical tension. At Peridotflow, we turn to this potent bark when the body is holding trauma in muscle, nerve, or womb. It offers sedative and antispasmodic effects that go beyond surface symptoms—bringing deep rest to both body and mind.

Potent Pain Reliever for Muscular and Nerve Pain

Jamaican Dogwood is known for its strong analgesic properties, making it a go-to herb for nerve pain, sciatica, migraines, and menstrual cramps. It may also be useful for arthritic or injury-related pain when rest is difficult due to discomfort.

Relieves Menstrual Cramping and Uterine Spasms

Traditionally used by midwives and herbalists for painful periods, Jamaican Dogwood helps relax uterine muscle spasms and reduce sharp pelvic pain. It is particularly helpful where cramping is accompanied by irritability, anxiety, or insomnia.

Calms Nervous System Overload and Hyperarousal

As a sedative and nervine, Jamaican Dogwood soothes states of nervous tension, agitation, and restlessness. It can help support transitions into sleep or deeper states of rest in those who are chronically wired or overstimulated.

May Support Migraine and Tension Headaches

This herb is sometimes used for headaches—especially those related to neck tension, nerve sensitivity, or menstrual cycles. Its antispasmodic and analgesic effects make it a valuable ally when pain is rooted in nerve-muscle constriction.

Eases Spasmodic Cough or Involuntary Muscle Spasm

Jamaican Dogwood may be used for dry, spasmodic coughs or other nervous system tics and tremors. Its ability to unwind tension in both voluntary and involuntary muscle makes it unique among nervines.

Folklore & History

The name 'Dogwood' comes from its historic use in veterinary care, while 'Piscidia' refers to the bark's use in traditional fishing practices—where its compounds would stun fish without toxicity to humans. Caribbean and Central American healers have long used it as a pain and sleep aid, particularly for uterine and muscular pain.

Traditional Usage

Traditionally prepared as a decoction or tincture for pain, sleeplessness, or menstrual cramps. Externally applied in poultices or oils for nerve and joint pain. Often combined with other calming herbs in women's health formulas.

Herbal Actions

Analgesic, Antispasmodic, Sedative, Nervine, Uterine Tonic, Hypnotic

Energetics & Tissue States

Temperature: Cooling

Moisture: Moistening

Tissue States: Tense, Excited, Dry, Spasmodic

Active Compounds

- Isoflavones (rotenone) – sedative, antispasmodic
- Piscidin – nervous system relaxant
- Alkaloids – pain-relieving
- Tannins – astringent properties

Dosage & Preparation

- Tincture: 0.5–2 ml up to 3x/day
- Decoction: Simmer 1 tsp bark in water for 15–20 min; take 1 cup up to 2x/day
- Use under supervision for stronger doses

Safety & Contraindications

- Not suitable during pregnancy or breastfeeding
- May cause drowsiness—avoid driving or operating machinery
- Use with caution in liver conditions
- Should not be combined with pharmaceutical sedatives or alcohol

Herbal Pairings

- Cramp Bark – for menstrual tension
- Valerian – for deep nervous system rest
- Passionflower – for emotional anxiety with muscle tension
- Skullcap – for twitching and hyperexcitability
- Licorice Root – to buffer intensity and add adrenal support

Peridotflow Perspective

Jamaican Dogwood is our shadow worker—one that supports the unraveling of stored pain, both physical and emotional. It holds a sacred place in our apothecary for womb pain, chronic nerve trauma, or exhaustion hidden beneath high-functioning stress. It teaches that true rest often comes through surrender.