

**PHCOG MAG: NEWS COLUMN  
AMERICAN BOTANICAL COUNCIL**

P.O. Box 144345,  
Austin, TX 78714-4345  
Phone: 512-926-4900 x121; Fax:  
512-926-2345  
Contact: Nancy Moon  
Email: nancy@herbalgram.org  
Web site:  
<http://www.herbalgram.org/>  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**News Release**

**October 14th is HerbDay 2006!  
Events Planned to “Celebrate  
Herbs and Herbalism”**

(Austin, TX, February 7, 2006). The American Botanical Council, working with four national nonprofit organizations as the HerbDay Coalition,[i] are proud to announce that the first annual HerbDay will be held on Saturday, October 14, 2006 - and you are invited!

HerbDay is a coordinated series of public educational events celebrating the importance of herbs and herbalism through harmonized, independently planned activities taking place throughout the week leading up to and including October 14, 2006. These activities will occur at retail stores, botanical gardens and parks throughout North America. HerbDay activities will be designed by each hosting venue which will have broad latitude in selecting its own events, such as lectures and workshops by well-known herbalists; herb walks; in-store cooking demonstrations featuring herbs and spices; seasonal herbal handcrafts; in-store herbal beauty product demonstrations; presentations by herb company representatives; activities with herbal themes for children; etc. Many segments of the herbal community will be hosting events, providing sponsorship and contributing financial support. All

ABC members are invited to participate actively in HerbDay 2006. It is not too early to start developing ideas for local HerbDay activities so no town or city is left out of the celebration inadvertently. The public is invited to participate in all activities and to encourage local retailers, botanical gardens, and other locations to plan and host events. In addition to local and regional events, the HerbDay Coalition may produce one or more “keynote” events specifically designed to draw media attention. A series of national events are tentatively scheduled at the U. S. Botanic Garden in Washington.

“We are extremely pleased to be part of this group of national organizations working together cooperatively to create such an important event,” said Michael McGuffin, President, American Herbal Products Association. “We have designed a very innovative and dynamic opportunity to bring the public a positive message about herbs in their own communities,” added Wayne Silverman, PhD, Chief Administrative Officer of the American Botanical Council. McGuffin and Silverman represent their organizations in the HerbDay Coalition.

ABC members who want to participate in HerbDay are invited to visit [www.herbday.org](http://www.herbday.org) to review the initial menu of ideas developed by the HerbDay Coalition. This website will be the primary location for organizing and disseminating information about HerbDay activities and resources. A registration feature will be added in the near future to provide continuous event and participation updates along with the opportunity for you to share what you are planning for the herbal celebration!

[i] American Botanical Council (ABC); American Herbalist Guild (AHG); American Herbal Pharmacopoeia (AHP); American Herbal Products Association (AHPA); and United Plant Savers (UpS).

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P.O. Box 144345, Austin, TX 78714-4345

Phone: 512-926-4900 x121; Fax:  
512-926-234

Contact: Nancy Moon  
Email: nancy@herbalgram.org  
Web site:  
<http://www.herbalgram.org/>  
News Release  
February 8, 2006

***New Clinical Trial on Saw Palmetto Inconsistent with Positive Results in Previous Studies***, Clinical Evidence Supports Use of Saw Palmetto for Mild to Moderate Prostate Problems (Austin, Texas) The results of a new clinical trial on the popular herb saw palmetto may confuse the public, especially men with prostate problems, according to the American Botanical Council, a nonprofit herb research and education group. The trial, published this week in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), found no significant differences between a saw palmetto pill and a placebo in men with moderate to advanced prostate problems. [1]

Saw palmetto is an herbal dietary supplement that is widely recognized for its safety and efficacy in treating mild to moderate symptoms associated with benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). BPH is a non-cancerous swelling of the prostate gland in older men, resulting in various symptoms associated with the interruption of normal urinary flow.

“Our primary concern with this trial is the relatively advanced condition of the prostate problems in many of the men who were tested,” said Mark Blumenthal, Founder and Executive Director of ABC.

Blumenthal emphasized that the men in this trial experienced moderate to severe symptoms of BPH, although most of the previous controlled trials showing positive results and efficacy for saw palmetto were conducted on men with mild to moderate symptoms of BPH. The men in the trial had scores between 8-35, i.e., moderate to severe BPH, according to the American Urological Association Symptom Inventory (AUASI).

“Most of the official international monographs that recognize the benefits of saw palmetto do so for stage 1 and 2 of BPH, i.e., the mild to moderate range of BPH symptoms,” said Blumenthal. “These include monographs from the German government and the World Health Organization.”

“The results of this trial need to be seen in the perspective of the preponderance of the existing evidence, including at least 21 controlled trials showing positive outcomes with saw palmetto preparations,” he added.

In the new trial reported in NEJM, conducted at the University of California at San Francisco, 225 men (112 in saw palmetto group; 113 placebo) 49 years of age or older with moderate to severe BPH were randomly assigned to groups who took a leading saw palmetto extract (160mg twice daily, the normal dose shown effective in over 21 clinical trials) or a matching placebo capsule. The patients made 8 study visits over a one-year period to assess changes in the AUASI scores (this is the

primary outcome of the trial), maximal urine flow, post-void residual urine volume, prostate size, and other health-related outcomes. On average, participants in both the saw palmetto and the placebo groups improved over the one-year duration of the trial, but there were no significant differences in the rates of improvement overall between the two groups as measured by the AUASI.

While ABC believes that this trial employed a good design and used a high quality saw palmetto extract, the group pointed to an anomaly of the trial – the significantly higher adverse effect profile in the placebo group. Saw palmetto preparations are known to be safe and very well tolerated, producing few adverse effects. In this trial, minor adverse effects in the saw palmetto and placebo groups were nearly equal (saw palmetto, 39; placebo, 34) – evidence of the safety of saw palmetto. However, there were almost twice as many serious adverse effects in the placebo group (11) as in the saw palmetto group (6), suggesting that the patient population may have had other serious illnesses, possibly interfering in the attempt to treat the moderate-to-severe BPH symptoms.

The study was funded primarily by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, with additional funding from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

#### **About Saw Palmetto**

Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) preparations are made from the fruit of a small palm tree which is native to Florida and was a former staple food of Seminole Indians. Saw palmetto berries were widely used by Eclectic physicians of the

late 19th and early 20th centuries for a variety of indications, including treating the male reproductive system.

Saw palmetto extracts are widely used in Europe and in the past decade in the United States as a natural therapy to help maintain normal prostate and urinary function, particularly by treating the symptoms of BPH in men with mild to moderate cases of BPH.

A meta-analysis (statistical analysis of a group of studies) of 18 clinical trials published in the Journal of the American Medical Association [2] and another on 21 clinical trials carried out on over 3000 men as reviewed by the Cochrane Collaboration [3] have confirmed the safety and efficacy of saw palmetto extract preparations in treating symptoms of BPH, usually of stage 1 and 2. The latest meta-analysis [3] concludes that the clinical literature supports the use of saw palmetto preparations in treating symptoms of BPH in stages 1 and 2, and that saw palmetto preparations have shown efficacy and greater safety when compared to conventional pharmaceutical drugs (e.g., finasteride, aka Proscar®).

The safety and efficacy of saw palmetto preparations have gained international recognition by various governments and professional health groups. Saw palmetto has been approved by the German government’s respected Commission E [4] and the Canadian government’s Natural Health Products Directorate. [5] It is also recognized by leading scientists and physicians in Western Europe through a positive monograph by the European Scientific Cooperative on Phytotherapy (ESCOP), which acknowledges its efficacy for symptomatic treatment of

micturition (urinary) disorders in mild to moderate BPH. [6]. The World Health Organization also recognizes the efficacy of saw palmetto for treating lower urinary tract symptoms secondary to BPH stages I and 2. [7] Additional recent reviews of the medical and scientific literature have concluded that saw palmetto extract preparations are safe and effective for treating symptoms of BPH. These include The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs [8] and others. [9] Saw palmetto is frequently combined with other herbs that have shown benefit for prostate function to produce safe and effective preparations that have been clinically documented. For example, a leading European saw palmetto preparation also contains the root of nettle (*Urtica dioica*), for which several recent randomized controlled clinical trials have shown safety and efficacy, the most recent, conducted on 257 men in Russia, was published in July 2005 [10].

The large success of most saw palmetto trials has driven preparations of this traditional herb to large consumer acceptance, not only among natural health enthusiasts, but also in the mainstream market. In 2004 and 2005 retail sales of saw palmetto preparations ranked third (behind only garlic and echinacea), according to market report articles in the ABC's quarterly, peer-reviewed article *HerbalGram*. [11,12] The *NEJM* article cited a 2002 survey showing that about 2.5 million men were estimated to have been using saw palmetto preparations. ABC estimates that saw palmetto retails sales in all channels of trade in the U.S. may be as high as \$100-120 million or possibly more.

About the American Botanical Council  
Established in 1988, the American Botanical Council (ABC) is the leading nonprofit, member-based international organization working to educate consumers, healthcare professionals, researchers, educators, industry, and the media on the safe and effective use of herbs and medicinal plants products. ABC is located on a 2.5 acre site in Austin, Texas where it publishes *HerbalGram*, a peer-reviewed quarterly journal. ABC is also the publisher of The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs, a continuing education and reference book, which contains extensive monographs on the safety and efficacy of 29 popular herbs. More information is available at <http://www.herbalgram.org/>.

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Web site:

<http://www.herbalgram.org/>

Editor's Note: Mark Blumenthal is available for interviews. Please contact Nancy Moon per above.

February 17, 2006

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**News Release**

**ABC Adds New Members to Advisory Board**

(Austin, Texas) The American Botanical Council has recently added 13 new members to its Advisory Board. The latest advisors include experts from the broad

field of sciences and academic disciplines related to herbs and medicinal plants. These include the areas of botany, ethnobotany and horticulture, analytical chemistry, clinical medicine, integrative medicine, and nursing, pharmacology and toxicology, as well as informatics and quality control issues.

"We are deeply grateful that these herbal medicine experts and clinicians have accepted our invitation to join the ABC Advisory Board," said Mark Blumenthal, Founder and Executive Director of ABC. "In many cases, the appointments simply formalize long-term relationships and friendships. Many have already contributed their time and expertise to assisting ABC staff in the editorial development of numerous articles for ABC's publications, such as HerbalGram, HerbClip, and The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs."

In addition to numerous other duties, the primary role Advisory Board members play at ABC is participating in the peer review of ABC publications. However, they also assist in an advisory capacity, helping to determine ABC policy and activities. The 13 new members join 51 other scientists, clinicians and other experts who currently comprise the ABC Advisory Board.

The new ABC Advisory Board members are the following:

Ezra Bejar, PhD, Director of Technical Sciences, Herbalife International, Los Angeles, CA. A pharmacologist with extensive expertise in the use of bioassays for botanicals and in evaluating the safety and efficacy of dietary supplements, Dr. Bejar is also the co-author of *Herbs of Southern Ecuador: A Field Guide to the*

*Medicinal Plants of Vilcabamba* (LH Press, 2001). He has written chapters for several books on dietary supplements and currently serves as an editorial board member of the journals *Phytomedicine* and *Phytotherapy Research*.

Josef Brinckmann, Vice-President of Research and Development, Traditional Medicinals, Inc., Sebastopol, CA. Mr. Brinckmann is an expert on herb quality control and international herb monographs. He is co-editor of *Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E Monographs* (IMC, 2000) and *The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs* (ABC, 2003) and co-translator and editor of the recent edition of *Herbal Drugs and Phytopharmaceuticals: A Handbook for Practice on a Scientific Basis* (Medpharm, 2004) and *Medicinal Spices: A Handbook of Culinary Herbs, Spices, Spice Mixtures and their Essential Oils* (Medpharm, 2006). He also edits the *Medicinal Plants and Extracts* newsletter for the Market News Service of the International Trade Centre.

Trish Flaster, MS, Executive Director, Botanical Liaisons LLC, Boulder, CO. Ms. Flaster has worked in both the natural products and pharmaceutical industries where she has formalized botanical identification systems, sourcing of unique botanicals, completed sustainability studies, and protects the intellectual rights of native peoples with whom she collaborates. She has served as the editor of the newsletter for the Society for Economic Botany for 20 years and is currently producing an online virtual herbarium to satisfy the new GMP requirements for the natural products industry.

Charlotte Gyllenhaal, PhD Research Assistant Professor, Program for

Collaborative Research in the Pharmaceutical Sciences, College of Pharmacy, University of Illinois at Chicago; Research Program Manager, Block Center for Integrative Cancer Care, Evanston IL; Associate Editor, *Integrative Cancer Therapies*. In addition to her research on integrative cancer care, Dr. Gyllenhaal lectures on herbal medicine in the Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and is a co-investigator of the International Cooperative Biodiversity Group project, "Studies on Biodiversity of Vietnam and Laos."

Ken Jones, President and Medical Writer, Armana Research, Inc., Halfmoon Bay, B.C., Canada. Mr. Jones is co-author of *Botanical Medicines: The Desk Reference for Major Herbal Supplements*, 2nd Edition (Haworth Press, 2002), a textbook of extensive monographs on 33 herbs. He is also the author of numerous books, including *Nutritional and Medicinal Guide to Hemp Seed* (Rainforest Botanical Laboratory, 1995), *Cat's Claw, Healing Vine of Peru* (Sylvan Press, 1995), and various extensive reviews on herbs and related natural ingredients.

Edward Kennelly, PhD, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Biological Sciences, Lehman College, City University of New York, Bronx, NY. Dr. Kennelly, whose work has been published several scientific journals, is currently researching botanicals for women's health and cancer-chemopreventive constituents from tropical fruits. Dr. Kennelly's phytochemical analysis was the foundation of a recent HerbalGram article entitled "85-Year-Old Black Cohosh Root Still Contains Active Compounds." (HG 66)

Ikhlas Khan, PhD, Professor of Pharmacognosy; Assistant Director, National Center for Natural Products Research, University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS. The multilingual and highly prolific Dr. Khan is the Core Leader for research groups examining analytical fingerprinting for standardization of herbal materials and products. In recognition of his many scientific publications on the chemistry of botanicals, the International Society for Horticultural Science presented Khan with its 2005 Award for Meritorious Service. Prof. Khan also directs an annual conference, cosponsored by the University of Mississippi and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on quality, safety and efficacy of botanical dietary supplements.

Richard Kingston, Pharm D, CSPI, President, Regulatory and Scientific Affairs, Safety Call™ International Poison Center; Professor, Department of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology, College of Pharmacy, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN. An acknowledged expert on safety issues related to dietary supplements and drugs, Dr. Kingston is also the director of the recently-formed National Center for Dietary Supplement Safety at the University of Minnesota.

Roberta Lee, MD, Medical Director, Co-Director Integrative Medicine, Continuum Center for Health and Healing; Director of Medical Education and Integrative Fellowship, Beth Israel Medical Center, New York, NY. Dr. Lee is the co-author/editor of *Integrative Medicine: Principles for Practice* (McGraw-Hill, 2004) and was one of the first fellows in Dr. Andrew Weil's Integrative Medicine Program. Dr. Lee also holds an honorary fellowship at The New

York Botanical Garden where she conducts research on the traditional uses of botanicals in Micronesia.

Martha Libster, PhD, RN, CNS, Associate Professor of Nursing and History, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. Dr. Libster is author of *Herbal Diplomats* (Golden Apple Publications, 2004) and *Integrative Herb Guide for Nurses* (Delmar, 2001). The American Association for the History of Nursing awarded her the 2005 Lavinia Dock Award for Exemplary Historical Research and Writing. Dr. Libster has been a clinical herbalist for 15 years and speaks internationally on the complementarity of nursing and healing traditions.

Marc S. Micozzi, MD, PhD, Former Executive Director for Integrative Medicine, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Philadelphia, PA; Director, Policy Institute for Integrative Medicine, Washington, DC. Former Director, National Museum of Health and Medicine, Washington, DC. Dr. Micozzi has authored and edited 16 textbooks, including the textbook *Fundamentals of Complementary and Integrative Medicine*, 3rd edition (Elsevier Health Sciences, 2006).

Holly Shimizu, Executive Director, United States Botanic Garden, Washington, D.C. Ms. Shimizu is a former curator of the National Herb Garden at the U.S. National Arboretum. She served as Managing Director of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, VA, for four years before returning to the USBG in 2000. For the last 12 years, Ms. Shimizu has worked as a special correspondent for *The Victory Garden* on PBS.

Jacqueline Wootton, M.Ed., President and Director, Alternative Medicine Foundation, Inc; Director,

HerbMed® database and HerbMedPro™, the professional version of the database, unique research tools that are a benefit of ABC membership at or above the Academic level. Ms. Wootton was the Executive Editor of the *Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine* from 1996-2001, and is currently a section editor. She also serves as an Associate Editor for *Seminars in Complementary Medicine* and is a member of the international editorial board for *Evidence-Based Integrative Medicine*.

The names of the new ABC Advisory Board members will be listed with the current advisory board in *HerbalGram* and on the ABC website ([www.herbalgram.org](http://www.herbalgram.org)).

About the American Botanical Council

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