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Turnera diffusa

[Synonyms : *Turnera aphrodisiaca*, *Turnera diffusa* var. *aphrodisiaca*, *Turnera humifusa*, *Turnera microphylla*, *Turnera pringlei*]

DAMIANA (English, German) is a perennial. Native to tropical and subtropical America (particularly California, Texas, Mexico and the West Indies) it has small sweet-smelling, yellow flowers.

It is also known as Mexican damiana, *Oreg mawon* (Creole), *Orègue marron* (French), and Turnera.

Warning – too much taken internally can cause headaches and insomnia.

Diffusa is Latin (spread out) meaning ‘spreading’.

For a very long time the Mexicans have infused the leaves as a tonic tea which they call *hierba de la pastora*, and the leaves are also used sometimes in Mexico as a liqueur flavouring.

The plant was introduced to Europe in the early 1900s.

Although not proven scientifically its long held reputation as an aphrodisiac persists today.

Medicinally, some authorities believe that it may be of benefit in treating types of nervous disorder such as depression.