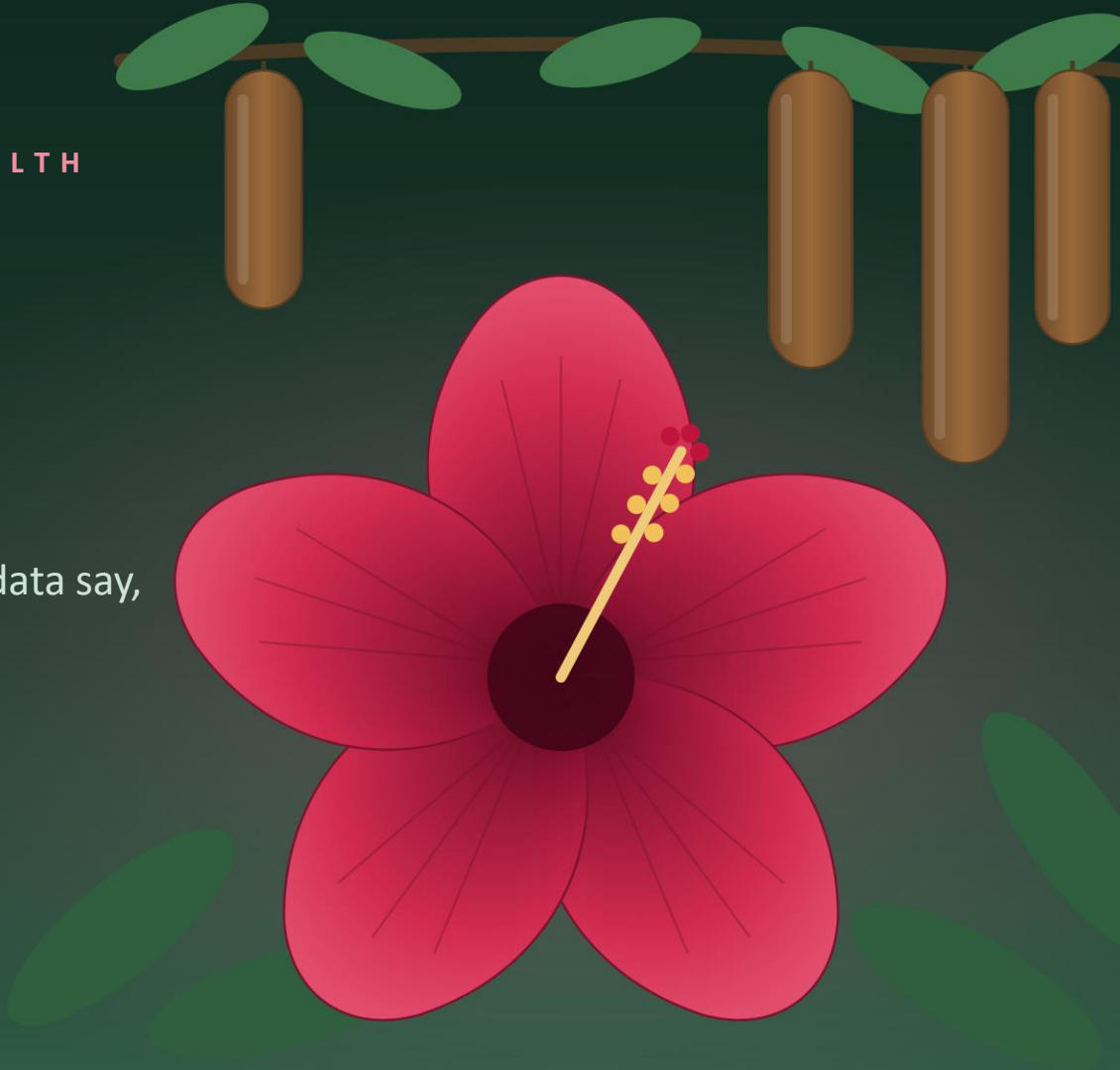


BOTANICALS · WOMEN'S HEALTH

Kigelia & Hibiscus

What tradition, research and safety data say,
with a focus on fibroids



Meet the two plants



Kigelia africana

The sausage tree

Also known as: sausage tree, worsboom (Afrikaans)

Family and range: Bignoniaceae; tropical Africa

Parts used: fruit, bark, roots and leaves

Forms: topical extracts, creams, capsules

Caution: the raw fruit is toxic



Hibiscus sabdariffa

Roselle

Also known as: roselle, sorrel, zobo, bissap

Family and range: Malvaceae; grown across the tropics

Part used: the dried red calyces

Forms: tea, cold drinks, extracts, capsules

Note: not the same as ornamental *H. rosa-sinensis*

Fibroids in brief

Uterine fibroids

Non-cancerous growths in the muscle wall of the uterus, also called leiomyomas or myomas.

70%

Up to about 70% of women are estimated to develop fibroids by age 50.



Heavy or long periods



Pelvic pain or pressure



Frequent urination



Bloating or a feeling of fullness



Fatigue, sometimes from anemia



Fertility or pregnancy problems in some women

How fibroids are treated today



Monitor

Small fibroids without symptoms are often just watched with regular check-ups.



Medicines

Hormonal and other drugs can control bleeding and pain, though relief is often temporary.



Procedures

Options include uterine artery embolization, myomectomy and hysterectomy.

Botanicals are not a substitute for diagnosis or for these treatments.

Kigelia: what we know



Traditional use

- Skin disorders, wounds and ulcers
- Gynecological complaints, per ethnobotanical surveys
- Rheumatism and inflammation
- Fruit extracts applied as creams and ointments



Lab findings

- Antibacterial and antifungal activity
- Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects
- Toxic to some cancer cells in dish studies
- Contains iridoids, naphthoquinones and flavonoids

Fibroids: no clinical trials of kigelia found.

Hibiscus: what we know



Human studies

- Tea modestly lowers blood pressure in adults with mild hypertension
- Cholesterol and blood sugar results are mixed
- A hibiscus, D-mannose and probiotic blend shows early promise for recurrent UTIs



Lab and other findings

- Rich in anthocyanins, organic acids and vitamin C
- Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity in cells
- Effects on hormones are not well established
- Most research uses *H. sabdariffa* calyces

Fibroids: no clinical trials of hibiscus found.

The evidence for fibroids

Traditional use

Documented

Both plants have folk uses; fibroid-specific use is thinly recorded.

Lab studies

Some, indirect

Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity, but not tested on fibroids.

Animal studies

None found

No fibroid models for either plant turned up in a literature search.

Human trials

None found

No published trials of either plant in women with fibroids.

For contrast, a small pilot trial of green tea extract reported smaller fibroids: a different plant, and still preliminary.

Where the benefits look credible

HIBISCUS

Moderate

Blood pressure

Several trials and meta-analyses show modest drops in mildly raised blood pressure.

KIGELIA

Limited

Skin care

Topical extracts appear in cosmetic products, backed mostly by tradition and small studies.

HIBISCUS (BLEND)

Early

Recurrent UTIs

A hibiscus, D-mannose and probiotic product looked promising in small studies.

BOTH

Unproven

Fibroid shrinkage

No human evidence that either plant shrinks fibroids or eases heavy bleeding.

Safety and cautions



Hibiscus

- Can lower blood pressure, so take care with blood-pressure medicines
- May change how some other medicines work; ask a pharmacist
- Pregnancy: safety is not established, so ask a clinician first



Kigelia

- Raw or unripe fruit is toxic; never eat it
- Few human safety studies, and product quality varies widely
- Skin extracts can irritate; patch-test first
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding: not enough data



See a doctor promptly for very heavy bleeding, severe pelvic pain, dizziness or fainting.

Key takeaways

1

Fibroids are common and treatable. Get a diagnosis and discuss options with a clinician.

2

Kigelia and hibiscus have interesting traditional uses and lab findings, but no proof they shrink fibroids.

3

If you use them, treat them as a complement: check for interactions, choose quality products and never delay care.