

357. *VALERIANA OFFICINALIS* L. (VALERIANACEAE) — Valerian

Largely used as a drug, especially a sedative (formerly termed narcotic). Valerian valepotriates have CNS-depressant and anticonvulsant activities in lab animals. Once a spice and perfume, still occasionally used in perfuming soaps. Anglo-Saxons used valerian as a salad, which sometimes took over its corner of the garden, and Scots added it to broths, meats, and pottage. According to Leung, the extracts and essential oil are components in beers, liqueurs, root beers, candy, frozen dairy desserts, baked goods, gelatins and puddings, meat, and meat products. Valerian is said to attract rats (the Pied Piper is rumored to have secreted valerian on his person). Valerian with CNS-depressant activities is reported to have antispasmodic and equalizing (sedative in states of agitation and stimulant in fatigue) activities. The valepotriates are mainly responsible for the CNS-depressant and antispasmodic effects. Other activities include hypotensive in experimental animals; antibacterial, antidiuretic, protective against experimental liver necrosis. An ethanol extract of valerian is said to have antidandruff properties.<sup>29</sup>

Valerian is regarded as a powerful nervine antispasmodic, as anodyne, bactericide, carminative, CNS-depressant, hypnotic, nervine, sedative, stimulant, stomachic, sudorific, tonic, tranquilizer. Its sedative virtues are used in convulsions, fever, hypochondriasis, hysteria, insomnia, neuralgia, and St. Vitus' dance; said to strengthen the eyesight. Once used as an anticonvulsant in epilepsy. Also, used for cardiac palpitation, catarrh, cholera,