

# **Spirostachys africanus Sond.: the Tambootie Tree: A Proving and Cured Cases**

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*This article consists of chapter four of the book, Arbor Medica: Four New Hahnemannian Provings with Cases*

**Abstract:** This article consists of a proving and several cured cases of *Spirostachys africanus* Sond.. Central themes of *Spirostachys* are found to include: Loss in purpose for life, indifference to life, a loss of sensory perception; especially for vision, taste and hearing.

**Keywords:** *Spirostachys*, Tambootie, Empty nest syndrome.

***Spirostachys africanus* Sonder**  
(synonyms: *Excoecaria africana* Muell. Arg., *Sapium africanum* Kuntze)  
Common names: African Sandalwood, Sandalo Africano, Tomboti, Tambootie

## **Tambootie Tree: The Proving Methodology**

In February of 1997 I traveled to South Africa. I took a sample of the root, bark, stems and leaves of the Tambootie tree. It was tinctured in 35% alcohol and then made up into the 30c potency by Dolisos Pharmacy. The provers took three doses of the 30c remedy a day for up to three days.

## **Description of *Spirostachys africanus***

This deciduous tree grows up to ten meters high. The bark is divided into small rectangles in rows. The white latex in the leaves is very poisonous. Even smoke from burning Tambootie wood causes nausea and eye irritation. The fruit appears from September to October; insects (pupae) cause the fruit to "hop" on the ground." The black rhino and porcupine eat the leaves. (Jacaranda Education, 1993)

*Spirostachys* has been used as a fish poison. The latex will blister the skin and is destructive to the eyes, causing blindness. Even those exposed to the sawdust complain of irritation to the eyes. African children are warned against the Tambootie

tree from earliest youth. Their fear of the living tree amounts practically to a taboo, stopping any desire to chop it down or damage it in any way. The wood is said to contain exocarín

The wood is extremely handsome, coppery-brown, and it makes attractive furniture. It is exported from East Africa as a substitute for sandalwood (Davy 1929). The wood is unsuitable for ox-yokes since it produces a "burning" effect on the animals' necks. The sap of the tree is reportedly acrid and capable of causing serious inflammation if applied to the eye or to skin abrasions. It may blister tender skin. The African is warned against the tambootie tree from earliest youth. The sawdust is very dangerous, irritating the eyes of sawyers, and may even cause blindness (Codd 1951, Pardy 1954, Watt & Breyer-Brandwijk 1962). Necklaces and charms, however, are made of it locally (Watt & Breyer-Brandwijk 1962). It is a very heavy wood; extremely hard, dense and strong, and it was formerly used to make gun-stocks and wagons. The wood can be included with stored clothing as an insect repellent. It resists termites, borers and other insects and is virtually rot-proof. The scent is reminiscent of sandalwood, but somewhat sweeter. It is unsuitable for use as fuel for the pleasant aromatic smell of burning wood can result in headache and a bitter taste in the mouth. (John Mitchell Watt and Maria Gerdina Breyer-Brandwijk, *The Medicinal and Poisonous Plants*

of Southern and Eastern Africa, 1962.

## Proving of *Spirostachys africanus*

Extraction of the Proving Symptoms for *Spirostachys africanus*

Proving journal for: I.B and D.L.

(P1): Took two doses of the 30c remedy.

(P2): Took nine doses of the 30c remedy over three days.

Only new symptoms which the provers never before had experienced are listed.

(Quotation marks are deleted.)

### Mind

#### Critical

Complaining a lot about society. It's all so superficial; society is so superficial. No one in our society is allowed to speak out. It's not right. (P1)

More outspoken. I stood on the platform and heard the announcement: 'Gentlemen, the train will be eight minutes late.' Doesn't he realize that most of the people here are women? I felt I had to make a comment. I'm not covering up my thoughts and feelings as much as I have done because I don't care any more what others think. (P1)

They are all shit-heads. (P1)

Very bossy, domineering, worse than usual. No patience. Easily angered. (P1)

#### Delusions

I don't feel good about myself. My body feels flabby and big. I don't feel good in my skin. I don't know what to wear. It feels like my body doesn't belong to me. I don't know how to clean or clothe it. I don't want to feed it or give it anything to drink. It's not my body. It's as if my body doesn't exist. It has nothing to do with me. I can't identify with it. I have to drag it about. I might as well let it go to pieces. (P1)

I twice had the sensation that someone was in the room, when I turned around, no one was there. (P2)

#### Indifference

I feel empty. Nothing matters. I don't care. (P1)

I don't care if I miss work today. In all missed three days of work. (P2)

Why should I care? Why bother with anything? Why not just quit my job altogether? (P2)

I didn't bother to take my usual shower this morning. (P2)

I have not done the dishes in three days - I don't want to cook, why bother? (P2)

The kitchen table has all of yesterday's dishes all



over it - breakfast, lunch, and dinner dishes. I don't want to do any housework or wash any dishes. The house is getting dirty. I've gone two days without a bath or shower - I don't want to bother. I don't care about people any more. (P1)

Nothing matters any more. I feel ambivalent. (P2)

I used to be hard on myself; now I don't care or feel bothered enough to do this. (P2)

I care less about my appearance than usual; I don't want to put any effort into it. I don't know what to wear. It's just one more thing to do for others. I don't want to do anything for anyone. To have a shower is a major achievement. I've been wearing clothes with holes in them and mismatched clothes. I try to care, but I don't. I'm fairly content if I'm left alone. I have no enjoyment in eating. (P1)

Aversion to cook for her son. I let him cook his own supper, a can of ravioli. He is 8 years old. I cried because I felt so bad that I was so unfair to him. I felt guilty for treating him bad. My son says to me, 'Mom, why can't you be normal?' (P1)

After drinking coffee (antidoting the remedy): cleaned her kitchen; i.e., had not cleaned the kitchen or done the dishes for days; is able to shower again, and will answer the phone again. Feels she is returning to her old self. (P1)

#### Irritability and Anger

I usually fight a lot with my ex-husband. Since taking this remedy, he is treating me with a lot of respect and he is offering to do things. No more fighting with him. He used to be an enemy; now we can talk in a civilized way. He didn't know I was doing a proving. (Curative action). (P1)

I feel annoyed that my son wants something from me. At dinner time he gave me a look like he wanted something; so I put a can of beans on the table with

a can opener and said, "That's you dinner tonight."

Even his presence irritates the hell out of me. (P1)

I feel offended very easily. I feel people are more on my case. They all seem to attack me and treat me like an idiot. I will not stand for it. I will not let them get away with it. I feel more outspoken and get into arguments more easily. I get annoyed when people swear at me or stand in front of me when I'm talking to someone else. Bloody outsiders seem to invade my space. Because she is so argumentative, she is now restricted from visiting her son's school. (P1)

Anger affects my belly. It feels like something is in my belly, as if it is totally stretched. In my head, I go over and over these things, the unfairness of it. (P1)

I hate rules and regulations, especially new rules. I have an aversion to do anything, especially if asked to follow a rule. (P1)

I was so angry that I could not sleep for the last three nights. I tossed and turned all night. My body was wide awake. I was angry, fed up, frustrated, high-strung. (P1)

I pick fights with people at the store. I bit one woman's head off. I don't give a shit. I don't even want to talk to them. They ask too many unnecessary questions. (P1)

Since taking this remedy, I am more patient with my son. I used to be more impatient with him. (Curative action). (P1)

Suppresses anger. I feel I have no rights. I feel I have to bite my tongue ten times a day. (P1)

With people feels sharp, short and snappy. (P2)

Impatient, intolerant of people. (P2)

Less angry with her son. (Curative action). (P1)

Aversion to people making demands on me. I get really angry. (P1)

I would feel resentment and irritable if I were forced to do anything. (P2)

Annoyed more by my mother; I hung up the phone on her. (P2)

### **Dignity**

I want to hold on to my dignity. (P1)

They don't want me to be proud or have self-esteem. (P1)

### **Obstinate**

I am fighting with people a lot. They are on my case. I can't stand it. I don't want to cooperate. It's getting out of hand. I am rude and obnoxious. I am absolutely right. I told him I didn't care what he said - he was trying to stop me from parking. (P1)

### **Paranoid**

Dream of people taking advantage of her. I am sick and tired of being taken advantage of. It's pay-

back time. I feel people are taking advantage of me. I feel this every day. Then I tell them how I feel. (P1)

I feel really upset if people take advantage of me; ready to be angry. (P1)

### **Pessimism**

I feel I have a new view of reality. The world is very unfair due to the authorities. Nothing succeeds. Things won't go in my favor. The people in power have made it unfair. I won't give in to it. (P1)

It's never going to work; so why bother? I want to forget my problems; perhaps they will go away by themselves. (P2)

### **Sadness**

I felt depressed; so I stopped doing everything. (P2)

### **Slowness of Mind**

Thinking seems slow. Slow to answer questions. Difficult to find the right words. (P2)

Memory worse since taking remedy. (P1)

Concentration a bit less focused. (P1)

Shorter attention span for reading. (P1)

### **Sensitivity**

Feels hurt more easily. My feelings seem too sensitive. I feel that I am being rejected. (P2)

I feel I am taking things too personally. (P2)

Aversion to disappointing anyone. I wanted to please my friend. (P2)

Aversion to be a bother to my friend in any way. I felt a bit more timid. (P2)

### **Withdrawing**

What do they want from me? Leave me alone. They get too close to me. I want to get away from them. (P1)

I want to be quiet, alone and at home more than normal. Aversion to having the television on. Wants to sit and read alone. Shuts the phone off at 8 p.m. I need to be alone to recharge. (Has always loved to live alone. When she was a child, she counted the years until she could have a place of her own.) Doesn't care much about material things. Aversion to demands made on her. (P1)

Aversion to anyone being in my space.

Not irritable when alone; feels better when alone. (P1)

I feel like a loner. I want to be free from others. She wants a choice when to socialize. Feels like a hobo. Ready to move on or ready to meet someone. Finds it hard to function in society. I'm shutting out the big questions of life. I'm just existing day to day, and want to be left alone. (P1)

I feel anti-social. Feels she is treating her son

badly. I need more peace and quiet; this is worse than usual.

Very irritable, worse than usual. (P1)

I want to disappear and start some place new. (P1)

I want to be left alone and not have any responsibilities. I want to withdraw. Aversion to having anyone step across my boundaries. (P1)

I want to get away. I don't want to deal with people any more. I want to pack my bags and leave, go somewhere new. I feel I have overstayed my limit. I would like to go to New York and live there for a while. I would fit in with the other strange people. (P2)

Desire to be alone. (P2)

## Head

Pain temples, worse from light. (P2)

## Eyes and Vision

Overall my vision is better, even when I take my glasses off. (Curative action). (P1)

Vision is better at night when driving, sharper, less blurry; no more halo around streetlights even in the pouring rain. (Curative action). (P1)

Blurry vision on the right periphery of the right eye. (P1)

My eyes feel tender and sore. (P2)

It seems more difficult to focus, as if a film were over the eyes. Hazy vision. (P2)

For two days she had the sensation that something was sticking to her eyelashes, making them harder to open. (P1)

## Ear

A lot of ringing in the ears yesterday. (P2)

## Nose

Loss of sense of smell. (P1)

## Mouth

Sore spots on tongue. Right side of tongue is swollen, sore to touch. Numbness of the sides of the tongue, not the tip. Tongue feels as if it is in the way. Less sense of taste; can only taste on the tip of the tongue. Used to have painful aphthae on the tongue – has sensation as if this is starting again. (P1)

Loss of sense of taste. Sensation of tongue burning; worse smoking cigarettes, salty foods, toothpaste. Tongue feels swollen and sore. (P1)

Burning sensation in tongue, sides and back, when she smokes a cigarette. (P1)

Sensation of burning of the tongue from chocolate, from a spicy cookie. (P1)

Dryness of mouth. (P1)

Tongue feels swollen again. (P1)

Awareness of glands under the tongue at the sides – a bit swollen. (P1)

No sense of smell or taste. (P1)

Thirstier than normal. (P2)

Aversion to hot and warm foods – no comfort from them.

I can't enjoy anything that goes in my mouth. (P1)

## Stomach

Less appetite. Food doesn't feel right in my mouth. (P1)

Has no appetite. What reason is there to eat? Has no idea where the next meal will come from. (P1)

I feel very thirsty. (P2)

No thirst. Doesn't care to drink. (Most likely a curative action). (P1)

## Back

After twenty minutes of taking the remedy, there was a relaxation of tension at the base of her neck and an amelioration of stiffness and pain. (She usually experiences severe pain and stiffness at the base of her neck - curative action). (P1)

Stiffness in the neck. (P2)

## Extremities

Pain in both shoulder joints. I could not breathe, it was so bad. (P1)

My old symptom of right shoulder pain (from working at the computer) is much better. (Curative action). (P1)

Painful gnawing ache in the hips. (P2)

Still feels overly heavy and big. My butt (gluteal region) feels too big, like a duck. (P1)

Perspiration of the hands and feet. (P2)

Stiffness in the hips. (P2)

## Sleep

Waking early, at 5:30 a.m., ready to go. Usually drags herself out of bed at 7:30 a.m. (Curative action). (P1)

Sleeping for two hours in the afternoon. (P2)

I am sleeping deeper and harder than normal. (P2)

## Dreams

Of old friends; nostalgic; felt sorry for another person - I was trying to help her. (P2)

## General

Aversion to sweets - feels they will aggravate her tongue. (Usually likes sweets.) (P1)

Sensation of heaviness or limpness of the body, as if getting the 'flu.' (P1)

Body feels heavy and bloated. (P1)

Usually when I drink alcohol, I get aggressive and angry, but this week when I drank, I felt mellow, calm, and relaxed. It put me in a good mood. (Curative action). (P1)

I feel generally exhausted and wiped out. (P1)

## Case One

Emma, 57 year-old mother of three children

December, 1999

On her first visit I gave her *Rhododendron*. This improved her symptoms considerably. The symptoms it helped were: hair loss, very low vitality, joint pains in the hands and feet (2), muscle pains (2), and headaches on waking in the morning. The guiding symptoms to give *Rhododendron* were: joint pains worse before a storm (2) and needing to cross the legs in order to fall asleep.

After repeating the 30C of *Rhododendron* over the next couple of months the above symptoms were greatly ameliorated. She no longer had severe joint pains - 95% better; her headaches got better, her energy improved, she became more peaceful in herself, there was much less hair loss in the shower, she was falling asleep faster, there was less congestion in the sinuses, and generally her emotions became stronger.

In June of 2000 the remedy seemed to have little effect on the symptoms that were left over and so I gave her *Rhododendron* 200C which helped again.

October, 2000

She was having a sore throat and other cold symptoms.

The shoulder pain was still 95% better from the previous doses of *Rhododendron*. She could no longer sense when a storm would come. Much less allergic reaction to eggs since *Rhododendron*; they used to give her diarrhea.

Difficulty with hearing on both sides (2). Her sense of smell seemed dull and inaccurate.

She noticed that she had poor night vision (2).

Aversion to work, especially to house work. She seemed to have a stillness inside her; people did not seem so important to her. "I feel detached from people."

**Analysis:** She had some of the main symptoms to indicate *Spirostachys*: dullness of the senses and loss of ambition.

**Plan:** *Spirostachys* 30c one dose.

November, 2000

"That was a good remedy - it worked quickly!" she exclaimed. "It cured my cold quickly and cleared

my head. After the second dose it made me feel very warm and I perspired a lot after I took it

"I have discovered a new hobby - quilting, I really enjoy it, making the design, sewing the fabrics together; I find it very creative. This is an inner shift for me; I feel more passionate about the things I enjoy to do."

Her night vision was better.

"I feel I have been holding myself back over the years. I had stopped wanting or having a desire for things I had made myself go without for so long. I would always put my children first. This took over my life, so I did not have any other relationships. I no longer needed anyone. I feel this is starting to change now.

"Since taking the *Spirostachys* I have become more aware of color and the smell of things, like perfume. So I started to redecorate my house. First, I planned it all in my head; then I set out. I found myself more daring in my expression; in the past I would have been more held back.

"I remember when I was in high school I used to be best friends with the 'odd' teenagers. Now I am finding that I am more attracted to these type of people again. I find I can connect to them through humor."

Her energy and vitality were steady and good. She was working hard.

"Before the *Spirostachys* I felt that I was hearing things through water; now this feeling is better."

The minor joint pains that were left over from the *Rhododendron* in her fingers now seemed better.

March, 2001. Four months later:

She had taken the *Spirostachys* a few more times. She became depressed and angry for a while; so she took the remedy and the next day her mood was much better and she became optimistic again.

"I have become more outgoing in general; I used to be so comfortable to stay home and not connect with anyone. Now I feel this is what life is all about and it is a validation of who I am to connect with others. I am much more involved in life and care more about the details."

She developed a vaginal yeast infection. "The last one I had was twenty years ago. It got better after taking some *Acidophilus*." The mild headaches on waking were all better. "Overall, my head feels more clear and less congested from the chronic colds."

Her night vision was all better now. "In the past while driving, I could not see how close I was to the curb; I was driving off the road when turning a corner. It was as if there was not enough light for me to see. For the last ten years I have needed more light to see things at night."

"My hearing is a lot better. The distortion is gone.

I used to have too much mucus in my ears." She still had some back pain, stress between the shoulder blades. "I do so much that I wear myself out. I feel more organized; I get more done. I used to worry about things that hadn't happened yet; I notice this is better. Overall, I feel less tension in my body." Her nails were stronger and grew faster.

When she had a cold or a yeast infection, she noticed that she lost more hair. More chilly overall; she took longer to warm up. She was also bothered by too much heat.

"In the past the 'Catholic' in me was always said, 'You need to sacrifice to be worthy.' Now I have stopped doing this. I am no longer trying to be so religious."

"I married at a young age to get out from under the domination of my mother, but then my husband was also domineering, so I became very frustrated and stuck. I had no meaningful relationships until my children came along.

"After I left my husband, I stayed single. I did not want to lose my freedom again. If a man gets too close to me, I easily feel smothered. So, therefore, I had a history of ending relationships with boyfriends when they got too close. I became indifferent to relationships because I did not have the energy to maintain my own identity in them; I was too easily dominated.

"I used to get nausea from the smell of food; this is better."

**Analysis:** The remedy was working deeply; it was helping her to understand her life and to find the solutions to old problems which have held her back for many years. As her identity and passions grow stronger, she can risk getting closer to people again. She is no longer lost so easily within the identity of other people's needs. Compare *Carcinosin, Thuja*.

**Plan:** Continue *Spirostachys* 30C as needed.

*May, 2001*

She continued to do well. All the physical symptoms were still better. Her hearing was now 100%.

She started a business in interior decorating, had a show and did well. She seemed to have too many clients and had to hire some help. She felt a bit suffocated by her business and would catch herself not breathing. She wanted to cut back on the business.

"I know when to take the remedy because, when I am half asleep, I get a feeling that an energy from the outside is trying to get into my back. I tell it to get out, which it does, but I know that if it got into me then it would paralyze me. I know this because when it enters me, I can't move. At times, when the stress builds up in my life, I feel it will do the same thing - immobilize me."

Her hearing was excellent; there was no more sensation that she was hearing through water. Her sense of smell was also much better overall - "I know what I like to smell now and what I don't like to smell. I have no problem driving at night now; I don't even remember that I had that problem when I am driving."

She was still connecting well with people. "I notice that my intuition is a part of me now and that I don't have to fear it. It leads me to new things that I don't necessarily act on, but that I can think about. I am more open to change in my life and not so worried about the future."

*November 11, 2002 - one-and-a-half years later*

"I have had no relapses." The only symptom to report is that her joints can be sore on cold and damp days. If this gets too severe she takes the Tambootie and feels better.

She was still working and, in general, felt well.

## Discussion

What can be learned from this case? On the physical level, we can see that her sense of hearing, smell and vision were all helped, if not cured. This is a confirmation of the information which was learned during the proving; i.e., dull senses generally identified.

Before she took the *Spirostachys*, on the emotional level, there was a theme of being held back, stuck, isolated, suppressed, fearful, withdrawn, apathetic and paralyzed. After the remedy, she was able to find her ambition, creativity, purpose, intuition, freedom, and was able to connect with people again. The remedy was extremely deep-acting in its ability to be able to change such a life-long pattern that had been present for more than fifty-five years.

## Case Two

Ellen, 54 year-old mortgage broker.

*January 27, 2004*

She was extremely irritable at everything (3). "People are stupid (2) and they waste my time (2). I often express my anger at them. I would like to swear at them. In retrospect though, I am much too outspoken. I don't seem to care about what I say."

She was worried all the time about her clients (3). She awoke at 3:30 a.m. with anxiety.

"I crave fresh, cool air and open air (3)."

"I no longer want to take a shower or bath; it is too much trouble."

Craving for cream, rich food and sweets. "I find most other foods a chore, especially vegetables. I have a lack of appetite. I tend to skip meals and, when I eat, I have to make myself eat (2). Food seems

to have lost its sense of taste. Sometimes I cook dinner, but then I don't enjoy what I have made."

"I have lost the sense of purpose in my work. Why am I doing this job? I feel what I do is useless."

"The papilla on my tongue seem too long."

**Analysis:** She has many symptoms for *Spirostachys*: outspoken anger, lack of appetite, indifference to the taste of food, a lost sense of purpose, and indifference to bathing.

**Plan:** *Spirostachys* 200C, one dose.

*Ten days later*

"I enjoy a shower every day now. I also desire good food and my appetite is much improved. My overall attitude is also more positive and the anxiety is all better." No more irritability. "I have a stronger sense of purpose and I like to help people again. The ringing in my ear is quieter and my hearing has improved."

**Analysis:** Correct remedy.

**Plan:** Repeat remedy as needed.

She later took this same remedy for a toothache. It was a pain deep in the root of the tooth, worse from hot and cold, worse from touching the gum, worse after 6 p.m. After *Spirostachys* took care of this toothache she spontaneously said that her night vision had improved.

In April of 2005 she relapsed and expressed to me the following symptoms:

"I feel miserable (2). I hate my dead mother (2)." Her mother was abusive and not supportive. "I feel like a loser, edgy, restless and have no focus. My ambition is very low (2). I want to be alone and don't care if I lose out on my business deals. I want to give up on life. I am cut off from people and I don't care."

Itchy neck. Polyp on the inside of her mouth. Cataract, vision dim, worse at night (2). Her sense of smell was diminished (2).

**Analysis:** Relapse.

**Plan:** *Spirostachys* 30C as needed.

Two weeks later I received the following e-mail:

"Hi Steve,

Thanks for your concern. I have become 100% industrious from morning till night. I've picked up some new clients and have a couple of deals waiting to clear. I have also become busy with my little garden. I have harvested some beautiful narcissus and tulips that I planted last fall. I must say it is lovely having homegrown flowers in the house. I

recently dug up the garden (my poor back!) and have planted more flowers – one I have planted is *Eupatorium*. You prescribed that remedy once ....

My energy level is 9 out of 10 and I am enjoying interacting with people again. I still cough somewhat – from a tickle in the throat – and while it is not nearly as often, it's still an issue.... I continue to sprout new warts. Most of them are flat and small. My hearing has improved to 75%. The polyp on the inside of my mouth is shrinking."

By July her ambition and interest in life were still very strong. Her confidence was good. The case continues. In the past she had done very well with *Lac humanum*.

### Case Three

Lorna, 50 year-old homemaker.

She had previously done well with *Staphysagria*, but at a certain point it no longer helped her. She had a constant low grade pain and pressure in her ears - they felt congested and her hearing had decreased. A mole was growing too rapidly; so she had it removed. Her gums were sore and receding in spots. Sores on her chin – they ached and burned. More facial hair growth. Eczema behind the ears. Hands cold and fingers purple. Spider veins of the legs.

"I have lost my emotions; I can no longer feel things." Low sexual energy (2). Irritability (2). "My feelings are hurt easily. My hair has become unmanageable again. After I had a hearing test, the core of my body went into pain and I experienced nausea."

Feathers aggravated her ear pain; they also made her cough and sneeze. Ear pains with noises in the ears. Problems with night vision (2).

"I have lost my sense of purpose; it used to be about raising a family, but now they have left home. So now what do I do? I have no passion for anything. I still worry about my children. I am still offended easily, but not nearly as much as before the *Staphysagria*."

There was a bony lump on her collar bone. Sore fingers on the right hand; they were stiff and painful (2). Her sense of taste was not as keen.

**Analysis:** In this case the important symptoms for me were the loss of purpose in life since her children grew up, poor night vision, loss of sense of taste and her diminished hearing.

**Plan:** *Spirostachys* 30C, one dose.

*One week later*

The pain and pressure in her ear cleared up by fifty percent. The pain she had in her ear from coughing or sneezing was also much improved.

"I now feel more talkative." The facial sores were diminished. Her vision was brighter in the day and night. She was less sensitive to noise. She had more motivation to do things. Her hearing seemed at least fifty-percent improved. "My sense of taste is more acute."

**Analysis:** Correct remedy.

**Plan:** Continue remedy as needed.

*Two months later*

She took two more doses of the remedy since the last visit. Her vision now was even sharper, and her ear seventy-percent better. There was no difficulty when coughing or sneezing. "My hair is better – it has stopped falling out and it seems more shiny and healthy. My sex drive is also much better since this new remedy." Her general energy was also better (2). Her joints were less achy. Her sore gums were better. Her urine smelled strong like acid, with an ache in the kidneys – better when she drank more water. The lump on the collar bone was not detectable now on palpation. Eczema behind the ears was worse. The ear pain was fifty-percent better. There was less hair growth on her face. Her hands and finger were still cold.

"Generally I feel more interest in things, by at least thirty percent. She was still somewhat irritable, but less easily offended. "I still worry about my children and their future. My sense of taste is better still."

**Plan:** Continue *Spirostachys* 30C.

*June, 2004*

"I feel like my old self again. My headache and ear ache are ninety-five percent better now; so is my sexual energy (2)." Sleep was deeper. There was no more pressure in the ears. "If my gums start to hurt, then I know that I need a dose of my remedy. My skin is less dry overall. I have to shave my legs every day and the hair on my head is so much thicker."

She later went on to take a 200C of *Spirostachys*. She explained that this dose made her feel a lot happier in general. If I go too long without the remedy, then the metal of my ear rings will make my ear lobes become raw and bleed. She continues to improve and the case is still ongoing.

## The Materia Medica of *Spirostachys* - the Tambootie Tree

*Spirostachys* is a deep-acting constitutional remedy, one that may, in time, become quite useful for

serious physical and emotional pathology. The principal element of *Spirostachys* which indicates its use is a loss in one's sense of purpose in life and dullness of the main sense organs - hearing, vision, taste and smell.

As people become older they are less able to maintain or change their mission and purpose in life. They find it difficult to taste or find zest for life on many levels, physically and emotionally. When the senses are dull, there is no strong impression; they feel lost in the 'fog' of their own experience.

In two of the cases the mother experienced an 'empty nest syndrome,' but one can imagine many people who lose a job or retire and then find themselves 'at loose ends.' They then might ask, "Who am I, what is my reason to exist, what is my purpose in life?" For them, at that stage of life, life seems dull – they can no longer hear, see or taste properly; life all seems so meaningless.

*Spirostachys* is able to generate a new spark of life in these individuals; they are able to receive strong impressions again physically and emotionally.

It is a remedy for people who have given up or who have problems which seem insurmountable. They no longer care about anything; they are profoundly indifferent to employment, family or their immediate environment. Through the circumstances of their lives, they have got to the point where they see no meaning; in fact, they see no value in anything. As a result, they see no reason to take any action or to do anything. There is no ambition to work, take care of themselves or to learn new things. They would rather be alone and do nothing. Even taking a bath seems pointless and they may find themselves eating food which requires no preparation.

*Spirostachys* patients feel some anger when they are confronted by situations in society that do not seem to be fair. Rather than take action to make changes, they feel a desire to escape the responsibilities which come with such challenges. Instead of action, these patients may suddenly become angry, shout out rudely, or just hang up the phone. This is made worse by the fact that they do not care what others think of their behavior.

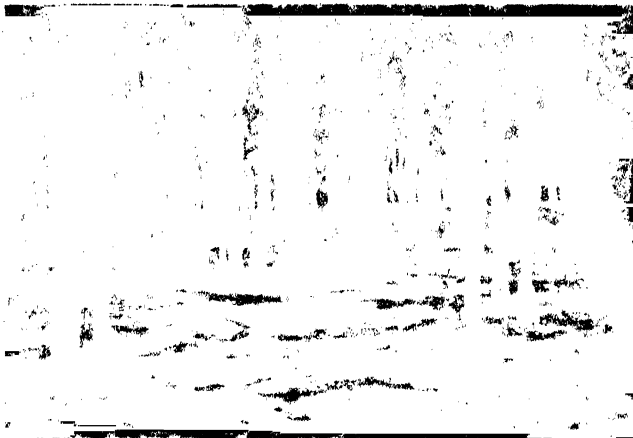
Their opinion of issues is difficult to change since they have a fixed way of seeing the world.

Many of these people are unemployed or are on some form of government assistance. They are likely to have very little contact with others. If there are no available public programs or help from family members, then it is likely that they will end up on the street, homeless people, vagabonds, hobos, or drifters. A number of symptoms support this idea:

### Themes of *Spirostachys*

Loss of purpose in life.  
Dullness of the senses.  
Indifference.  
Inertia, torpor.  
Anger at unfairness.  
Withdrawn, remote.

1. They don't like human company or social rules.



2. As they have such an indifferent attitude, it does not matter to them whether or not they have a place to sleep, adequate food or clean living conditions.
3. They do not care what they eat. In fact, they could eat out of a can, for all the difference it makes to them, as they have probably lost their sense of smell and taste.

Generally the mind of *Spirostachys* is in a state of torpor; it is sluggish, slow to react, and has a weak memory. The patient may often sleep most of the afternoon.

There can be severe and destructive inflammations in the joints, the eyes, the skin and in other organs.

The sense organs are particularly affected and have largely become ineffective: no longer are they able to receive strong impressions. This condition is close to the pathology seen in *Helleborus*. There can be pain in the eyes, dimness of vision, as if looking through a film, and eventually, loss of vision, especially the loss of night vision.

The tongue and sense of taste is also strongly affected; it burns and feels swollen and numb. This may be from the lack of eating fresh fruits and vegetables or from a difficulty of nutrient absorption.

There can also be a loss of hearing; sounds seem to be experienced as if they were heard though water.

In the later stages of cancer this remedy may be needed: indifference to food, giving up on life, the desire to be alone (to die), signs of nutrient deficiency. As is the case for many of the symptoms of this remedy, there is a general withdrawing from life and the people they were once close to.

## Remedy Comparisons for *Spirostachys*

### *Ipecac*

*Ipecac* and *Spirostachys* patients have a desire to be alone; they feel easily irritated and estranged from society.

### *Ammonium sulphuricum*

Like *Spirostachys*, *Ammonium sulphuricum* is disgusted and critical of society. Both can also be untidy and indifferent to external things.

### *Arbutus menziesii*

*Arbutus* patients feel a lack of meaning in their life. They have no ambition, feel lazy and irritated when expected to do things.

### *Plastic - Polystyrene*

(See proving by R. Sankaran). *Plastic*, like *Spirostachys*, seems to experience no meaning in life. They both experience depression and have no ambition.

### *Helleborus*

Both remedies are needed for patients who are indifferent to everything. *Helleborus* is slower to answer questions.

### *Staphysagria*

Both *Spirostachys* and *Staphysagria* suffer from suppression of their identity, indignation and both are timid.

### *Sepia*

Indifference is the main symptom in both *Spirostachys* and *Sepia*. Both also have a desire to be alone, feel easily irritated by others, and they experience headaches which are worsened by light.

### *Gelsemium*

Both *Spirostachys* and *Gelsemium* patients feel headaches which are worsened by light; they experience indifference to company and have an aversion to employment. Compared to *Gelsemium*, *Tambootie* patients display more anger at society and experience more fear of responsibility.

### *Carcinosin*

Both *Spirostachys* and *Carcinosin* lack a strong sense of identity, but they try to please others. In *Spirostachys*, this is done out of obligation; in *Carcinosin*, it arises from a sense of sympathy and concern for others. Both have an identity which is easily suppressed by others, leading to a reduction in their sense of self.

*Thuja*

*Spirostachys* and *Thuja* also lack a sense of unique identity. *Thuja* patients are willing to change their identities in order to find a connection to others. *Spirostachys* seems to be more at a loss as to where their identity went to; it seems to be lost and they are indifferent to this fact.

*Lac humanum*

Both *Lac humanum* and *Spirostachys* can feel complete indifference toward people and life in general. *Lac humanum* can be used for a person who feels no attachment toward others or too much attachment. Both remedies can have deep depression, very low sense of self and poor bonding with their mother. *Lac humanum* patients often have a sensitivity to milk or crave milk.

**Repertory Additions for *Spirostachys***

MIND; AILMENTS FROM; anger, suppressed  
 MIND; AMBITION; loss of  
 MIND; ANGER  
 MIND; ANGER; Alcohol, drinking, after  
 MIND; ANSWERING; slowly  
 MIND; CENSORIOUS  
 MIND; COMPANY; aversion to  
 MIND; COMPLAINING  
 MIND; CONTRADICTION; intolerant of contradiction  
 MIND; CONTRADICTION; intolerant of contradiction; Rules, aversion to:  
 MIND; CONVERSATION; aversion to  
 MIND; DELUSIONS; attacked, being  
 MIND; DELUSIONS; enlarged, body is  
 MIND; DELUSIONS; enlarged; body is, parts of body  
 MIND; DELUSIONS; people; behind him, someone is  
 MIND; DELUSIONS; rejected, by others  
 MIND; DULLNESS  
 MILD; EMPTY, nest syndrome  
 MIND; ESTRANGED; himself, from:  
 MIND; ESTRANGED; himself, from; and hid body, so neglects himself:  
 MIND; ESTRANGED; society, from  
 MIND; FORSAKEN feeling  
 MIND; FORSAKEN feeling, children left home  
 MIND; HOME; desires to go  
 MIND; HOMELESS  
 MIND; IMPATIENCE  
 MIND; INDIGNATION  
 MIND; INJUSTICE, cannot support  
 MIND; IRRITABILITY; children, towards  
 MIND; IRRITABILITY; children, towards, own, his  
 MIND; LAZINESS  
 MIND; MEMORY; weakness of memory  
 MIND; NEGLECTING; household, the

MIND; OFFENDED, easily  
 MIND; PLEASING; desire to please others  
 MIND; PREJUDICED; traditional prejudices  
 MIND; QUARRELSOME  
 MIND; RESPONSIBILITY; aversion to  
 MIND; RUDENESS  
 MIND; SENSITIVE  
 MIND; SPEECH; slow  
 MIND; STRANGE; crank  
 MIND; SUSPICIOUS  
 MIND; TIMIDITY  
 MIND; UNTIDY  
 MIND; WEEPING  
 HEAD; PAIN  
 HEAD; PAIN; coughing, on  
 HEAD; PAIN; Temples  
 EYE; PAIN  
 EYE; STICKY lids  
 VISION; BLURRED  
 VISION; DIM  
 VISION; DIM; night  
 VISION; FOGGY  
 VISION; HALO around the light  
 VISION; LOSS OF VISION  
 VISION; LOSS OF VISION; night  
 VISION; WEAK  
 EAR; ULCERATION; Lobe; Hole for earrings;, in  
 NOSE; SMELL; diminished  
 NOSE; SMELL; wanting  
 MOUTH; INFLAMMATION  
 MOUTH; INFLAMMATION; Gums  
 MOUTH; NUMBNESS; Tongue  
 MOUTH; PAIN  
 MOUTH; PAIN; Tongue, spots  
 MOUTH; PAIN; burning; Tongue  
 MOUTH; PAIN; burning; Tongue; eating, chocolate:  
 MOUTH; PAIN; burning; Tongue; eating; spiced cookie:  
 MOUTH; PAIN; burning; Tongue; salt food, from  
 MOUTH; PAIN; burning; Tongue; tobacco, from smoking:  
 MOUTH; SWELLING; Glands  
 MOUTH; SWELLING; Tongue  
 MOUTH; SWELLING; Tongue, Under  
 MOUTH; TASTE; diminished  
 MOUTH; TASTE; insipid  
 MOUTH; TASTE; wanting, loss of taste  
 STOMACH; APPETITE; diminished  
 RECTUM; CONSTIPATION  
 EXTREMITIES; PAIN; Shoulder  
 EXTREMITIES; PAIN; Shoulder; breathing, on  
 EXTREMITIES; PERSPIRATION; Hand  
 EXTREMITIES; PERSPIRATION; Foot  
 SLEEP; DEEP  
 SLEEP; HEAVY  
 SLEEP; SLEEPINESS; afternoon

SLEEP; SLEEPLESSNESS; anger, after  
SLEEP; WAKING; late, too  
DREAMS; EVENTS; past, long  
DREAMS; FRIENDS; old  
SKIN; ERUPTIONS; burning  
SKIN; INFLAMMATION  
SKIN; ULCERS  
GENERALS; HEAVINESS; Externally

*About the author: Steven Olsen ND, DHNAP is a teacher at the Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine. He has been in full-time practice since January of 1988. He is the author of several provings which are included in his books "Trees and Plants That Heal" and "Arbor Medica."*

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