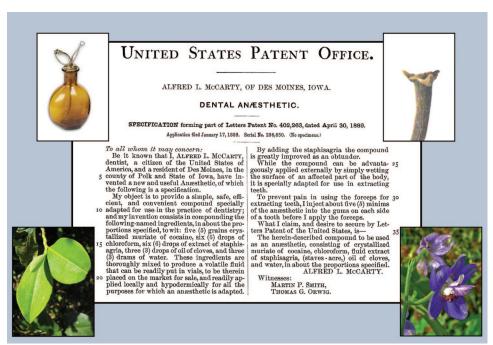
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## ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

## McCarty's "Dental Anaesthetic"



Known later as Lice-bane after Hippocrates introduced it as a pediculocide, *Delphinium staphysagria* (Greek for "dolphin bunch-of-wild-grapes") is a blue flowering plant, the buds of which resemble a dolphin's snout or a lark's heel (hence its other name, Larkspur). The foul smell and burning taste of *staphysagria*'s seeds did not discourage ancient Greeks from chewing them to relieve toothache. To avoid cocaine's toxicity, an lowan named Alfred L. McCarty was granted U.S. Patent No. 402,263 (*center*) on April 30, 1889, for the "Dental Anaesthetic" that he compounded from cocaine, chloroform, cloves, and *staphysagria* (*clockwise from bottom left*). Blissfully unaware of *staphysagria*'s medicinally useful polyoxygenated norditerpenoids, McCarty was likely cognizant of the herb's use both by the ancients and by his contemporaries, many of whom used it in homeopathic doses for toothache. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image also appears in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

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