NERVINES and ANTISPASMODIC HERBS

LOBELIA	**SCULLCAP**	**VALERIAN**	**HOPS**
WOOD BETONY	**CRAMPBARK**	**BLACK COHOSH**	**WILD YAM**

OTHER: Mistletoe(Germany)

Nervines act as nerve tonics to feed, regulate, strengthen and rehab the nerve cells. They either stimulate or sedate with the result of lessening the irritability or pain of the nervous system. Theses are not narcotics or opiates such as the medical physicians prescribe.

Antispasmodics are herbal agents that prevent or relieve excessive contractions (spasms) of the muscles.

Lady Slipper is a good herb for the nerves but is on the endangered list so is not discussed.

LOBELIA

(Botanical name: Lobelia inflata)

Family: LOBELIACEAE





Common names: Lobelia, puke weed, emetic herb, emetic weed, Indian tobacco, asthma weed, gag root, vomit wort, asthma root, gag root, eyebright, wild tobacco, or bladderpod. Lobelie enflee (Fr), Aufgeblasene Lobelie (Ge)

Part Used: Herb and seeds (seeds are much stronger).

ID:

Stem 6"-3' high, yellowish-green, cylindrical, angular, hairy
Leaves alternate, ovate-lanceolate, serrate, veiny, hairy, pale green
Flowers numerous, smaller pale blue, on long loose racemes with short pedicels.
Fruit inflated, 2 celled oval capsule containing a number of small 1/2 to 1/3" long, ovate-oblong, light brown seeds, coarsely reticulated on outer surface

Odor is slight and irritating

Taste is strongly acrid, resembling tobacco. Pungent, a bit bitter.

Temperature: warm with cooling potential

Moisture: neutral

Constituents:

.2-.6% Alkaloids: piperidine, lobeline, lobelanine, lobelanidine.
Carboxylic acids: chelidonic acid and phenyloxypropionic acid

Growing:

- annual in warm latitudes; biennial in moderate and northern latitudes
- in meadows, pastures, woods, grassy places in North America
- grows up to 3 feet high.
- Plant from seed and during hot dry spells, water frequently
- flowers July to Sept.

Collection:

- whole plant is active, gather from late July - mid October.

Drying and preserving:

- best in tincture form
- do not store in paper as both herb and seeds contain a volatile oil that can be absorbed and lost.

HISTORY

Early settlers once used this plant as an emetic and expectorant, as well as a treatment for respiratory ailments. As its common name suggests, Native Americans once smoked this plant as a medicinal remedy for asthma.. Though folk medicine once spread the belief that this plant could be helpful in countering the effects of nicotine and breaking tobacco addictions, the FDA published research showing that it is ineffectual in this respect. The plant is also known as pukeweed because doctors prescribed the herb when wanting to induce vomiting. The species name "inflata" refers to the inflated seed pods of this plant

Areas Affected:

Heart and circulation, intestines, lungs, kidneys, bladder, nerves, uterus, skin

Therapeutic Action:

antispasmodic emetic
diaphoretic stimulant in small doses, esp. respiratory
nervine sedative expectorant
relaxant in larger doses anti-venomous
counter-irritant emmenagogue
diaphoretic diuretic
cathartic astringent
nauseant
- corrector of whole system
- efficient relaxant
- best counter-irritant known
- action is felt immediately on serous, mucous, muscular and nervous systems, esp. sympathetic nervous system
- powerful antispasmodic
- effective in causing immediate relaxation and expansion of contracted parts of respiratory system
- allows oxygenized blood to flow freely to de-energized tissues.
- removes obstruction and congestion within body, esp. blood vessels
- lessens depression through baso-motor and strengthens muscular action of vessel walls which propel blood
- given to pregnant woman, if fetus is dead it will cause to abort; if fetus is well and healthy and mother is weak, will cause mother to heal and strengthen to help delivery
- lobelia should not be underestimated during labor since it is perhaps the most efficient herbal dilator of the cervix and a good relaxant parturient for women who tend to hypertonic contractions due to qi constraint.

MEDICINAL USES:

Skin: Abscesses, chicken pox, boils, eczema, insect stings and bites, ringworm
Heart: angina pectoris, heart weakness, heart pain with anxiety, palpitations, acute heart failure, heart blood congestion, how or high blood pressure
Lungs: asthma, bronchial problems, pleurisy, bruises, catarrh, colic, congestion, cough, croup, whooping cough, laryngitis, Dry harsh coup,
Muscles: spastic muscle conditions, inflammations, rheumatism, spasms of spine, muscles, chest
Brain: meningitis, epilepsy, fainting, hysteria, nervousness, calms spirit, mental stupor, purple lips, stroke
Nerves: nerve deficiency or excess, nervous unrest

Blood: blood poisoning, blood circulation problems
Cold sweats, colds, convulsions, cramps, fever
Digestive: constipation, digestive disturbances, slow painful digestion
Earache
Virus: measles, scarlet fever, smallpox, fever, cold sweats
Female: spasms of genital organs, muscles. For labor when contractions are hypertonic and not working or she has no will to continue with labor. Lobelia will space out the contractions and make them more effective. Will help violent pains in loins during labor. Will prevent threatening miscarriage if baby is healthy - up to 60 drops of tincture may be taken every half hour.
Irregular painful menstruation
Bladder constraint with difficult painful urination
Liver: hepatitis
Kidney: nephritis
Poisoning: poison ivy, poison oak
Sprains, stomach irritation(small doses)
Tetanus (lock jaw), zymotic diseases
Vomiting (small doses)
Cold, shock, collapse, stroke, fatigue, cold limbs, chilliness
Eye inflammation
Dr. Christopher used to say that Lobelia had an unusual gift. If a pregnant lady took the herb and she aborted, it was because the plant knew the child was defective and needed to be aborted; if she took the herb and the baby was healthy, it would help prevent miscarriage.

Contra-indications and Toxicology:

Some reports say the plant is poisonous, another says toxicity has not been established. It contains alkaloid lobeline which has a similar effect upon the nervous system as nicotine.
Do not use during pregnancy or lactation.
Discourage excessive use.
Avoid if you have high blood pressure, tendency to fits and heart disease.No poisonous properties, entirely destitute of any narcotic powers.
Lobelia is a safe remedy, firstly it has a built in safety mechanism whereby overdosing produces vomiting (the alkaloid isolobinine effectively causes emesis if an overdose of alkaloid lobeline should occur). This mechanism can occasional fail, watch for signs of overdosing. Secondly, there are records of herbalists using as much as 15 ml (3 fl. oz) within a 24 hour period for up to a week without untoward effects.
Lobelia is contraindicated in dyspnea from enlarged or fatty heart, weak heart with valvular incompetence, sinus arrhythmia; pneumonia, asthma of cardiac decompensation; hydrothorax, hydropericardium.
Mildly unpleasant symptoms may occur at any dosage level, varying individually.
Overdosage can produce severe adverse effects including nausea and vomiting, profuse diaphoresis, paresis, tachycardia, hypotension and coma; fatalities have occurred.

Preparation:

Decoction, fluid extract, infusion, pills, poultice, powder, syrup, and/or tincture.
Do not use lobelia tincture from drug stores as it is extracted with an etheric menstruum.
Root should be decocted or tincture (1:10) for best results.
Herb is infused or tinctured.
Crushed seed is made into a long infusion.

Lobelia vinegar is excellent for skin conditions.
External preparations include poultices, compresses, salves, enemas.
Herb may be smoked, esp. for qi constraint conditions.
As emetic to produce vomiting dosage is 4-5 ml of the Tincture

Infusion: Seed is best used when crushed.
Powder: Use leaves, stems, flowers and/or pods
Tincture: Use green or dried herb

Dosage:

Decoction: 1/2 cupful
Fluid Extract: 10-30 minims
Infusion: 1 cupful
Powder: 3-10 grains
Solid Extract: 2-4 grains
Syrup: 1-4 drams
Tincture: 1/2 to 1 tsp or 10-30 minims

Administration:

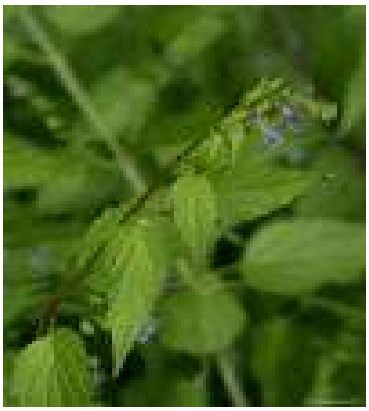
Lobelia rapidly influences all parts of the body. However, due to its highly diffusable nature, it should always be used with more permanent stimulant such as cayenne or peppermint.

Anal:
Fevers, pneumonia, pleurisy, nephritis, hepatitis, meningitis: add lobelia to a catnip enema
Oral:
Asthma: use as emetic to free breathing and promote healing
Hepatitis: see formulas
Mad Dog bites: steep 1 tbsp lobelia in 1 pint boiling water, drink as much as possible to induce vomiting and cleansing of stomach. Follow this mixture with high enema of lobelia and catnip.
Pleurisy: give lobelia and pleurisy root in an infusion.
Thyphoid, typhus, spotted fever, scarlet fever: 1 tsp antispasmodic tincture (see formulas) in a little warm water every 1/2 hour. Wash body daily with 2 parts hot water and 1 part apple cider vinegar. Change bedclothes and sheets daily, give warm water every 2 hours.
Baby convulsions: place drop or two of antispasmodic tincture on tip of finger and thrust it into baby's mouth. This will stop problem immediately.
Painful cramps, spasms: Give 1 tsp antispasmodic tincture in 1/2 cup sweetened warm water. Action will take about 15 min.
Skin:
Earache: place a few drops warm lobelia tincture in the ear and plug it with cotton.
Mucus and spasmodic congestion (esp. babies): Rub lobelia tincture into neck, chest, between the shoulders.
For any external problems apply a poultice consisting of 1 part lobelia and 2 parts slippery elm.
Swellings, pneumonia, pleurisy, boils: make compress or plaster of lobelia, of hops, bran or lard.
Rheumatic fever: Rub whole body from the neck to the toes with antispasmodic tincture. In bad cases where they cannot sit up or move the arms or legs, give 1 tsp antispasmodic tincture in a little hot water every 1/2 hour until perspiring freely. Keep patient in bed and allow him to cool down; then wash him with apple cider vinegar and hot water. Give patient 1 tsp antispasmodic tincture in hot water every 2 hours during first day, and every 3 hours for a few days thereafter. When the case demands, rub some antispasmodic tincture externally and be sure to sponge patient with apple cider vinegar and hot water.

SCULLCAP

(Botanical name: Scutelleria lateriflora)

Family: LABIATAE/LAMIACEAE (mint)







Common names: Skullcap, Blue scullcap, Pimpernel, helmet-flower, mad-dog skullcap, mad dogweed, madweed, mad-dog, hood wort, hooded willow herb, side flowering scullcap, American scullcap, blue pimpernel, pimpernelle (Ger) and Marajes (Span)

Part used: dried herb

ID

Stem: square, small, smooth, erect, leafy, branched, 1-2' long
Leaves: opposite, ovate-lanceolate 1-3" long, growing gradually smaller toward top of stem, coarsely serrated.
Flowers: one sided axillary, leafy, spike like racemes, several or many 1/4" long, pale blue, two lipped calyx, upper lip helmet like protuberance, 4 stamens that are in pairs under upper lip and unequally cleft pistil
Fruit: 4 nutlets
Taste: slightly bitter, not nauseating
Odor: slight

Growth:

- perennial, indigenous to America
- best in wet and shady ground, found in meadows, by ditches, sides of ponds
- flowers July - Sept.

Collection:

- gather while in bloom, deteriorates rapidly with age

Drying, Preserving:

- dry in the shade, then store in air-tight containers
- deteriorates rapidly from age and heat

Therapeutic action:

NERVINE TONIC	ANTISPASMODIC	diuretic
calmative	anti-venomous	astringent

- one of the best nervine agents
- as stimulating to the nerves as quinine, lacks harmful side and after effects.

- calming and nutritive in neurasthenic conditions (neural conditions characterized by emotional conflict, worry, disturbances of digestion, circulation)
- excellent antispasmodic for restlessness, tremors, spasms, twitching of muscles, hyperesthesia (hyper sensitivity)
- will influence spinal cord and sympathetic nervous system (supplying various involuntary organs and blood vessels) as well as the brain, bringing to all a tonic influence which is quite permanent
- tones and soothes nervous system and without any narcotic properties, quiets patient and often brings about quiet, natural sleep
- slow working, must be taken regularly for a long period of time to be of permanent benefit

Medicinal Uses:

- nervous sleeplessness (insomnia), hysterical fits, convulsions
- spinal meningitis, chorea, epilepsy
- delirious, nervous headache, facial neuralgia,
- insanity, hydrophobia (mad dog bites), poisonous insect and snake bites
- cranial and uterine neuralgia,
- seminal (generative) weakness, general nervousness, nervous exhaustion, tremors, spasms, muscular twitching, hyperesthesia, neuralgia, intermitten fevers, palsy, rheumatism, suppression of excessive sexual desire, aches, pain, rickets, convalescence from fevers, incontinence of urine.

Preparation:

Fluid extract; infusion; powder, solid extract, tincture.

Dosage:

Scullcap is quite harmless and may be taken in larger doses for more sever cases.
Infusion: 1 wineglassful 3-4 times daily and 1/2-1 glassful at night upon retiring.
Powder: 1/4-1/2 dram (15-30 grains) or a #4 capsule, 2-3 or more times daily.
Solid Extract: 5-10 grains
Tincture: 1/2 - 1 tsp

Administration

<u>Anal:</u>

Hysteria: when scullcap tea cannot be taken orally, a small quantity may be given rectally every 30 minutes to 1 hour

Epilepsy: a stronger infusion of scullcap should be made for adults. This is 203 oz to each pint of distilled water, covered and steeped for 30 minutes in a hot place. Adults should take 1 wineglassful (or 1 cupful diluted) 3-4 times daily. Continue several weeks or longer if necessary.

Heart Weakness: combine with cayenne ad golden seal is excellent

Hydrophobia, poisonous insect, snake bites: 1 tsp of warm infusion or 1/2 teacupful of strong infusion diluted with water every hour until symptoms subside.

Insanity: after patient is under influence of lobelia and lady slipper, scullcap may be given freely with good effect

Nervous Exhaustion: infusion must be taken over period of time in order to receive permanent effect.

Neuralgia: Drink 1 wineglassful of scullcap infusion every 1-2 hours and 1 cupful upon retiring. 1 pint during a single evening would not be harmful.

Spasms, tremors, chorea: a strong infusion is the quickest and most effect form for adults.

Infusion of Scullcap:

1 1/2 oz Scullherb herb, cut
1 1/4 pints distilled water.
Bring water to boil, pour over her, cover, steep 20-30 minutes in a hot place. Strain, sweeten with honey, bottle, when cool and keep in a cool place.
Dosage: 1 wineglassful 3-4 times daily. And 1 dose before retiring to bed.
Children: 1 dessertspoonful to 1 tbsp, 3-4 times daily between meals.

VALERIAN

(Valeriana officinalis)

Family: VALERIANACEAE





Common Names: Valerian, English valerian, all-heal, great wild valerian, German valerian, fragrant valerian, wild valerian, common valerian, cat's valerian, Vermont or American-English valerian, setwall, vandal root, amantilla, capon's tail, Radix Verianae Minoris, Valerianae Rhozoma (Br) Valeriane officinale, Racie de Valeriane (Fr) Radix Valeriane, Baldrian, (Wilde) and Baldrianwurzel(Ger)

Parts Used: Rhizome and roots, also herb.

ID

Stems: lg, 2'4' high, round, fluted, channeled, groove, furrowed, smooth, hollow, thick, pale green in color, branched at top

Leaves: innate (4-10 pairs along clasping petiole), opposite leaflets 1 - 2 1/2" long, lanceolate, dentate (coarsely serrated)

Flowers: white, pink, small, terminal coryombs (large tufts at the stalk head). Fragrant, sessile (attached directly by base), tubular, 5 lobed petals, 3 stamens

Fruit: capsule, pale brown, compressed, planoconvex, oblong-ovate, 4 ribbed, 1 seeded

Roots: rhizome, upright, old roots often hollow; upper portion often shows leaf scales of stem bases and is yellowish brown or grayish. many fibered, numerous short lateral horizontal branches or stolons. Powder grayish brown.

Taste: Sweetish, disagreeable, camphoraceous, somewhat bitter, nauseous.

Odor: valeric acid, becoming stronger and disagreeably fetid upon aging; highly attractive to cats (odor excites sexual appetite) possibly rats too.

Growing:

- perennial easy to grow, spreads in garden nicely and the flowers smell wonderful.
- found in damp places like low-lying woods and meadows, along banks of rivers and lakes, generally in marshy and swampy ground, also in dry places
- four varieties existed. Very little of the wild variety indigenous to Europe is used commercial, it is smaller and more potent.
- cultivated types are produced in England (the best), Germany, Netherlands, English-American variety in the states of New Hampshire, Vermont, New York
- flowers June to August
- tops generally cut off in the spring to keep medicinal strength from dissipating into the plant and to strengthen the root.

Collection

- rhizome and roots gathered in autumn from the dry soil plants after the leaves have begun to decay
- dry soil plants are more developed but others should not be overlooked
- roots and rhizomes should be dug carefully as there are many of them and they are spreading and brittle
- clean roots and rhizomes. No specific odor at this time

Drying and Preserving:

- dry entire plant or split it as soon after digging as possible
- take care to preserve volatile oils
- pack tightly and keep dry to prevent deterioration

Therapeutic Action:

Stimulating ANTISPASMODIC	tonic
nervine (sedative)	anodyne
cathartic	diaphoretic
antithemic	diuretic (lithotryptic)
aromatic	carminative

- powerfully antispasmodic upon system
- gently stimulating, very soothing, quieting to nervous system, effective calmative
- slows down action of heart while increasing its force therefore it has been beneficial in cases of cardiac (heart) palpitation
- may be given in all cases to allay pain and promote sleep
- strongly nervine without any narcotic effects, enters into various herbal nervine and antispasmodic compounds
- produces an exhilarating sensation, esp. useful for young and delicate women as hysteria remedy with emmenagogue
- stimulates secretion and peristalsis of stomach and intestines
- anti-flatuent for infants and hysterical and hypochondriacal
- heals ulcerated stomach and is powerful in preventing fermentation

Medicinal

- nervous debility, weakness or irritation, hysteria, nervous coughs, delirium tremens
- restlessness in measles, scarlet fever, convulsions (infants), those due to worms, colic, cramps, insomnia, neuralgia, whooping cough, delirium with vital depression
- dysmenorrhea
- flatulence
- diabetes
- cholera
- epilepsy
- vertigo
- low fevers, colds
- gravel
- palpitation of the heart
- stomach ulcers
- digestive fermentations
- sores, pimples, dyspnea

Dosage

Elixir: 1/2 to 1 dram (tspfl)
Fluid extract: 5-15 minims
Infusion: 1 wineglassful 3 times daily before meals, and before retiring to bed at night
Powder: 5-20 grains
Solid extract: 5-10 grains
Tincture: 1-2 fluid drams

Preparation

Elixir, fluid extract, infusion, powder, solid extract and tincture.
Never boil root, much of therapeutic value is in the volatile oils.
Valerian may be preserved with glycerine.

Administration:

Valerian is potent, so be careful to give it in the prescribed dosages only.
Oral
Cough, dyspnea (shortness of breath), and expectorant: Strain a decoction of licorice (Glycyrrhiza glabra), anise seed (Pimpinella Anisum) and raisins over valerian.
Dysmenorrhea (difficult or painful menstruation): when taken hot, Valerian will promote menstruation
Hysteria, convulsions, colic, cramps, dysmenorrhea (see formulas)
Palpitation of the heart: Administer hot valerian with cayenne pepper
Restlessness in measles and scarlet fever (children, infantile convulsions): give small doses of Valerian infusion 2-3 times daily. A sound sleep will generally result.
Skin
Sores and pimples: apply Valerian root or herb externally, drink Valerian tea at the same time.

The correct dosage is 1 teaspoon of rootstock steeped in 1 pint of boiling water. Take 1 cupful in the course of a day. Of fluid extract, take 2 teaspoons in 1 cup of water. Let it stand 24 hours. Take ½ - 1 cup before bed. Of the tincture, take 20 drops, 3 times a day.

CAUTION:

Valerian should never be boiled.

Large doses of valerian causes poisoning.

Symptoms such as headaches, mental excitement, visual illusions, giddiness and even spasmodic movement can occur.

HOPS

(Botannical name: Humulus lupulus)

Family: CANNABINACEAE; MORACEAE; URTICACAE(cannabis)





Common Names: Hops, humulus

ID

Stems: herbaceous twiner (left to right), several rough angular and flexible stems. Up to 20' long and will twist around any adjacent support.

Leaves: opposite, deep green, very rough, cordate (heart-shaped) venate or nerved (veined) stalked, serrated, 3 or 5 lobed

Flowers: Diocecious (male and female plants) with numerous greenish pistle cone-like spikes which produce the fruit

Fruit: Strobiles or catkins. Ovoid cylindrical (roundish), 1 1/5" long, with numerous yellow-green membraneous scales that curve over each other. Fruit is reticulate-veined (network) with numerous brownwish glandular hairs (lupulin) at the base of each scale and enclosing a glandular achene.

Parts Used: Fruit or strobiles (cones, catkins)

Taste: very bitter, astringent & pungent. Temperature: cold. Moisture: dry

Odor: strong, somewhat agreeable. Upon agitation, odor becomes disagreeable, resembling that of valerian.

Growing:

- Annual stems, perennial root
- found in northern temperature zones of North America, Europe, Asia
- grows in hedges and open woods
- cultivated in U.S. and England for alcoholic drinks (beer, ale, porter)
- Grows easily in Medicine Hat but you need to be careful about buying the female type place instead of the male one or you won't get any fruit. In one season one plant grows into a large bush that you can train to grow around a trellis. It will need to be pruned back in the spring when you begin all over again.

Collection:

Gather when mature, usually in late summer and early fall. Hops consist of the dried strobiles of Humulus lupulus. Glandular trichomes can be separated from the strobiles by sifting and this material is known as lupulin.

The older Hops flowers, the more their lupulin content breaks down and oxidizes, resulting in stimulating side effects. Therefore, for best results hops over 6 months old should be avoided.

Drying and Preservation:

- care should be taken to preserve volatile oils of lupulin

- lupulin is the slightly transparent, golden, kidney shaped grains or powder which constitutes 1/7 of the hops
- the hops, esp. the lupulin, should be kept dark and in tightly covered containers. When the hops turn dark-reddish with valerian-like odor from aging, it should be discarded.

Constituents:

- resinous bitter principles (15-25%), phloroglucinol deratives
- volatile oil (.3-1%) mainly mono and sesquiterpenes esp. myrcene, humulene, caryophyllene, trithiahexane. Up tu .15% of 2-methyl-3 buten-2-ol can be dtected in the oil after storage of Hops for 2 years but only traces are found in fresh material.
- flavonoids (rutin) (.5%)
- polyphenols (tannins (2-4%)
- phenolic acids: ferulic acid and chlorogenic acid in small amounts.
- some oestrogenic substances reported.

Pharmacology:

Stomachic tonic due to an 11% crystalline bitter principle and lupulin acid (lupulite); the primary stimulant and secondary sedative effects are due to a 2% content of volatile oil and lupulin.

Areas affected:

Heart, liver, stomach, intestines, kidneys, bladder, skin, central nervous system.

Therapeutics:

NERVINE (sedative)	soporific	spasmolytic	tonic
anodyne	cholagogue	diuretic (lithotryptic)	stimulant
anthelmintic	stomachic	febrifuge	aperient
alterative	hypnotic	somewhat diaphoretic	astringent and anaphrodisiac.

Actions:

- powerful stimulating and relaxing nerve tonic
- increases heart action and capillary circulation yet will produce soothing slumber in nervous and excited cerebral conditions
- beneficial in affections of throat, bronchi, chest
- stomachic tonic due to an 11% crystalline bitter principle and lupulin acid (lupulite); the primary stimulant and secondary sedative effects are due to a 2% content of volatile oil and lupulin.
- increase flow of urine and dissolves calculi, with certain liver problems (such as jaundice). Its alterative property relieves the secreting glands by increasing the flow of bile and toning up the organ.
- a relaxing influence upon the liver ad gall ducts, an aperient to the bowels
- able to reduce inflammation and relieve accompanying pain.
- alcoholic exgtracts of Hops show a strong spasmolytic action on smooth muscle.

FUNCTIONS and USES:

Insomnia
Palpitations
Ringing in the ears
Sexual erethism or neurosis in all conditions incl. premature ejaculation, satyriasis, numphomania esp. with deficient yin
Estrogen insufficiency with result delayed or scanty menses

Insufficient breast milk
Relaxes nerve and frees spasms; relieves pain and induces rest
Hot flushes
Blurred vision
Spasmodic asthma, dry cough
Anxiety, anguish, cardiac pains, incessant talking
Scanty,delayed, painful menses
Scanty or suppressed urination, frequent irritable urination, bedwetting, painful urination, urinary stones
Poor appetite, fatigue, anorexia, anemia
Dry skin, skin rashes, boils, furuncles, abscesses, surface inflammations; skin eruptions: dermatitis, eczema, herpes, ringworm, scurvy, scrofula, acne; skin blemishes or deformities
Tuberculosis, venereal infections
Rheumatism, gout

CAUTIONS and CONTRA-INDICATIONS:

Inadvisable in depression. Since Hops is a mild depressant to the highest nerve centers, it should not be used in any conditionwith depresion nor combined with synthetic sedatives. Dosages should not be exceeded nor continuous use undertaking for th same reason.
Use during pregnancy with caution, preferably combined with other botanicals because of epression and because of its downward moving energy.

Preparation:

Fluid Extract
Infusion (steep 5-15 min.)
Powder
Tincture
Use both infusion and tincture of fresh flowers. Steep a long time (up to 1/2 hr) for best effects. Fresh freeze-dried extract is excellent too.
Being one of the foremost remedies for the skin, it can be used alone or in appropriate combinations in salves, compresses, poultices, washes.

Dosage: (daily)

Fluid Extract:: 10-15 drops 3 times daily
Infusion: 6 oz 3 times daily hot or cold
Powder: 5-10 #0 capsules which is 30-60 grains, 3 times daily
Tincture: 15-30 drops (1/2 to 1 tsp) three times daily

Administration:

<u>Oral:</u>
Bronchitis: combine hops with a little lobelia
General tonic/sedative: take infusion (1 oz hops to 1 pint water) in wineglassful doses.
Sleeplessness, nervous troubles, delirium etc: Take infusion in 2 - 3 tablespoonful doses every 1-3 hours as needed.
Cholagogue (liver), diuretic, anaphrodisiac and gonorrhea: Simmer 1 tbsp hops for 10 minutes in 1 pint water, drink 1/2 pint morning and evening.
Insomnia, nervous irritation: take 2-3 cupfuls of hot hops infusion or stuff a pillow with hops (sprinkled with alcohol (if desired) to sleep on.
Tremors of delirium: Combine tincture of hops with tincture of cayenne and take in /2 to 1 tsp

doses.

Worms: take 1/2 to 1 pint of hops decoction (1 oz hops to 1 pint of water, simmered 10 minutes) in the morning on an empty stomach

<u>Skin:</u>

Inflammation, rheumatism, neuralgia, boils, gatherings: Use hops poultice and fomentation

Toothache, earache, neuralgia: apply flannel bag of hops and moist heat over affected area.

WOOD BETONY

(Botanical name: Betonica officinalis; Stachys Betonica, Pediaris canadensis)

Pharmaceutical Family name: LABIATAE(mint)





Common names:

Wood betony, bishopswort, Lousewort, betony, beefsteak plant, high heal-all betonica (Span)

ID:

Stem: clustered, simple, slender, square, ubescent (hairy); 6-18" high
Leaves: Distant pairs, rough, hairy, oblong-lanceolate. They are 2-3 inches long, 3/4-1 inch broad, mostly radical (basal), pinnately lobed and with cranate margins (rounded scallops)
Flowers: Greenish-yellow, purplish red in colour. Libiate with smooth calyx, short, dense, oval and terminal spiked
Roots: white and thready
Taste: Bitter
Odor: slight and pleasant

Part used: Herb

Growing:

- **Hardy in the North America to Zone 4**
- **Native of Europe**
- **Found in thickets, shady waysides, dry, open woods from Nova Scotia to the Rockies**
- **Prefers shade but not dense shade, under deciduous trees is good but it won't grow under conifer trees.**
- **flowers July and August**
- **may be grown in an herb garden**
- **Start from seed in autumn or spring, or propagate from cuttings or divided clumps in spring. Once planted, growing betony plants will self-seed and spread slowly in the same area. Allow the plants to fill in an area until they become overcrowded, then divide them. It may take them three years to reach critical mass in sunny spots and as long as five years in the shade.**

HISTORY:

Wood betony herbs have a magical/medicinal history dating back to Ancient Egypt and have been used to treat everything from shattered skulls to silliness. Today, there is no

scientific evidence that wood betony herbs have medicinal properties, but plenty of herbalists still recommend it to treat headaches and anxiety.

THERAPEUTIC ACTION

NERVINE TONIC	**tonic**	**antiscorbutic**	**aromatic**
carminative	**astringent**	**alterative**	**stomachic**
aperient	**anthelmintic**	**anti-venomous**	

- remedy for all head and face pains and for nervous troubles.
- tonic for general digestive disorders
- effective alterative in cleansing impurities from the blood (as in scrofulua, rheumatism, jaundice)
- will open obstructions of liver and spleen, mildly stimulate heart, expel worms from system.

Medicinal Uses:

Pains of head and face	**neuralgia**	**hysteria**
dizziness	**dyspepsia**	**impure blood**
rheumatism	**scrofula**	**jaundice**
biliousness	**nervous troubles**	**heartburn**
stomach cramps	**colic pains**	**insanity**
headche	**pain**	**convulsions**
colds	**dropsy**	**gout**
influenza	**consumption**	**worms**
poisonous snake and insect bites		**delirium.**

Preparation:

Fluid extract, infusion, powder, tincture.
England: tincture 1 pt plant to 4 pt alcohol using herb. 25%
extract 1:1 25%

Dosage:

Fluid extract: 1/2 - 1 fluid dram
Infusion: 1 wineglassful, 3-4 times daily
Powder: 15 - 45 grains
Tincture: 1/2 - 1 fluid dram

Administration:

Use alone or combined with other botanical remedies.

CRAMPBARK or HIGH BUSH CRANBERRY

(Viburnum opulus var. americanum)

Family: CAPRIFOLIACEAE; RUBIACEAE(honeysuckle)





Note: this plant is not related to the cranberry although you may use the fruit to substitute for cranberry in any recipe.

Honeysuckle Family
Pharmaceutical name: cortex manuli Viburni opuli

OTHER NAMES: Cranberry Bush, European Cranberry Bush, Guelder Rose, Snowball Bush.

PARTS USED:

Dried stem branch bark most used
Fruit may be also be used as food and medicine.
Bark contains chemical called viburnine which is a bitter glucoside which acts as a muscle relaxant.

<u>Sister Plants:</u>

Black Haw or Stagbush or Sweet Virburnum or American Sloe (Viburnum prunifilium)
- root bark is used in threatened abortion, after pains, dysmenorrhea, nervous diseases of pregnancy, menorrhagia, asthma, hysteria.

CRAMPBARK is virtually identical in its nature, functions and uses to BLACK HAW with the following differences:

a) crampbark has greater bias for relaxing the peripheral nerves with somatic spasms rather than the autonomic nerves with visceral spasms like Black Haw.

b) known as squaw bush from Native American, cramp bark given prior to labor is a partus preparator of much value but an extent greatly inferior to Viburmum prunifolium (Black Haw).

c) unable to treat global conditions of qi constrain, cramp bark has no qi circulation and antispasmodic effect on the heart, lungs and stomach (all organs of the rhythmic sphere), unlike Black Haw.

crampbark like Black haw possesses a degree of astringency useful symptomatically in diarrhea, leucorrhea, spongy gums, loose teeth and the like.

GROWING: Found in the Northern U.S. And southern Canada. Deciduous shrub, grows to 15 feet tall, just as wide. It is native to moist lowland forests of England and Scotland. Berries can be eaten in moderation like cranberries. It is often found growing as an ornamental shrub.

HISTORY: Berries once dried have been sued for making ink. It is a national symbol of Ukraine where the plant is called Kalyna. The bark is made into extracts and tinctures, the dried berry is used to make dark dye and ink.

THERAPEUTICS:

Antispasmodic
tonic
diuretic
astringent
EMMENAGOGUE
nervine
relaxant
expectorant
sedative

- **highly regarded as an antispasmodic agent - muscle relaxant**
- **considered one of the best female regulators and relaxants of the ovaries and uterus and highly effective in preventing abortions due to nervous affections during pregnancy**
- **will speedily quiet the uneasiness and relieve the pains of uterine and abdominal cramps**
- **remedy for nervous disorders and spasms of all kinds**
- **inhale steam from a tea from bark to help asthma attack**
- **uterine sedative for labor pains**
- **bark tea for preventing miscarriage**
- **berries steeped, strained and drunk as cure for swollen glands and mumps, also are good source of vitamin C**

PHARMACOLOGY:

Nervous conditions of pregnancy
Abortive preventative, miscarriage
Dysmenorrhea
Menorrhagia
Ovarian irritation
Asthma
Fainting
Lockjaw
Hysteria
Cramps
Spasms
Flatulent stomach
Fits
Convulsions
Neuralgia

PREPARATION:

Decoction, fluid extract, infusion, powder, tincture.
Steep 1 tbsp fresh (or 1 tsp dried) bark in cup of boiled water.

DOSAGE: (daily)

Decoction (strong): 1 tbsp 3-4 times daily
Fluid extract: 1/2 to 2 fluid drams
Infusion: 1 wineglassful 3-4 times daily
Tincture: 1/2 to 1 fluid dram

CAUTION: no known precautions but always be careful with pregnant, nursing mothers, or if on any medications.

ADMINISTRATION

<u>Oral</u>
Cramps, vomiting of pregnancy, nervous indigestion, delayed menstruation, hysteria, congestion, hardening of liver, enuresis, cystitis, prevent abortion, epilepsy: see formula

Cramps of pregnancy, uterine pains, or any nervous trouble during pregnancy: give decoction of cramp bark alone or combine with other appropriate agents. see formulas.

<u>Strong decoction of cramp bark:</u>
2 oz Cramp bark
1 qt distilled water
Boil slowly in closed vessel for 20 min. Strain and return to clean vessel. Reduce to 3/4 pints, add 4 oz glycerine or 3 oz raw sugar. Boil slowly 5 min. Cook, bottle, Take 1 tbsp 3-4 times daily. Children: 1 tsp or more.

BLACK COHOSH

Botanical name: Cimicifugae rhizoma

Pharmaceutical name: RANUNCULACEAE(buttercup





Synonyms:

Cimicifuga racemosa, Actaeae racemosae radix, American Baneberry, Bugbane, Bugwort, Cimicifuga, Rattleroot, Rattleweed, Squawroot, Macrotys racemosa; M. actaeoides, Black Snakeroot, tall bugbane, rattlesnake root, rich weed, cimicifuga rhizoma, actaeae racemosae radix (Br), Racine d'Actee a Grappes(Fr), and Schwarze Schlangenwurzl (Ger)

The botanical name of black cohosh is derived from the Latin "cimex" meaning bedbug and "fugere" meaning to drive or fly away, in reference to its repellant action on bedbugs. The species name is from the Latin "racemosus" meaning full of flowers. Among the common names for this plant are black snakeroot, in reference to its use to treat snake bites, and black cohosh, cohosh being of unknown origin but probably a Native American name.

Part Used: Dried rhizome and roots of C. racemosa L. Nutt., Ranunculaceae.

ID AND GROWING:

Black Cohosh is a hardy native North American perennial herb, found from shaded areas to zone 3 from southern Canada to the Appalachian Mountains and as far south as Georgia and Missouri. It grows mostly on hillsides and in open woods in moist rich soil. Black Cohosh grows to about 8 feet tall and bears a handsome long plumb of white flowers from June to August. The leaves are pinnate and compound with irregular tooth leaflets. The rootstock is knotty and scared with old growth. The rhizome of the root is black and rough, Cohosh is a Native American word for rough, hence Black Cohosh.

Note that when we grow it in our yards, it does require water to survive. It likes rich humus soil such as found in the woods, but we have it grown in many places that fall short of that ideal. They say it will self seed under the right conditions, but I don't think that is the case in Medicine Hat. You can propagate it by division. It flowers late summer and many bugs are attracted to its pollen.

Harvest: gather Black Cohosh rootstock in the fall after the fruit has formed and roots are most active. Wash roots carefully, blot with paper towel or absorbent cloth. Dry in a well ventilated area away from smoke, pets and pests, preferably on wire racks.
Preserve: Rhizome deteriorates with age and should be used shortly after gathering. May also be preserved in tincture form.

History:

Black Cohosh has a long history of herbal use by Native Americans, and as an alternative medicine by early settlers. It was used mainly to treat painful periods and problems associated with menopause. Used in conjunction with St. John's Wort, it has proven to be effective in treating hot flashes and other menopausal problems. Black Cohosh is

believed to be useful for treating a range of other complaints; including tinnitus and high blood pressure. The fresh flowers have a strong odor and are effective insect repellents, thus the alternative name Bugbane.

Black Cohosh root was used by Native Americans to treat snake bite and as a ceremonial herb to bring visions. The root was thought by some early American settlers to be the main ingredient in witches brew, and any female caught with it in her possession was burned as a witch.

Black Cohosh is an endangered medicinal herb plant. Only the cultivated herb should be used. Do not harvest Black Cohosh plants or roots from the wild.

Early American settlers found that black cohosh was widely used by American Indian tribes. They made a poultice of the bruised root and applied it to poisonous snake bites. The Winnebagos, Penobscots and Dakotas in particular used it internally as well as externally for snake bites. They also used a decoction of the root to treat coughs, chest difficulties, diarrhea and irregular menstruation.

Although reports vary, the use of black cohosh by American settlers dates back to between 1696 and 1850. During the 19th century, it was used in New York hospitals in the treatment of rheumatism, although the medical establishment later eliminated this practice. Its use in the treatment of rheumatism has been widespread and still continues in some areas. For example, in Georgia it is mixed with other herbs in whiskey.

Historically, other uses have included treatment for scarlet fever, measles, smallpox, asthma, scrofula, St. Vitus' dance, bronchitis, intercostal myalgia, sciatica, whooping cough, tinnitus, pericarditis, angina pectoria, gonorrhea in mean, spermatorrhea, seminal emission, sexual weakness, dyspepsia, hysteria, menopause and general difficulties involving the female reproductive system.

Taste: **Bitter, a bit pungent, cool, dry**

Meridians: **Air, Warmth organisms Lung, Heart, Kidney, Chong & Ren meridians**

Energy: **Relaxing, calming, stimulating, restoring**

Constituents:

Black Cohosh contains Acetic-acid, Actein, Ascorbic-acid, Butyric-acid, Cimicifugin, Formononetin, Gallic-acid, Isoferulic-acid, Oleic-acid, Palmitic-acid, Salicylic-acid, and Tannic-acid. It is a powerful cardiac stimulant and has a sedative effect on the nervous system. Research has shown that Black Cohosh root has estrogenic activity and reduces levels of pituitary luteinizing hormone, thereby decreasing the ovaries production of progesterone. Black Cohosh is used in alternative medicine as an alterative, antidote, anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic, antispasmodic, astringent, birthing aid, cardio-tonic, diaphoretic, diuretic, emmenagogue (to promote menstruation), expectorant, hypnotic, tonic and to treat rheumatism.

Water when fresh: 79% **Water when air dried: 6.7%**
Sugars: 10% glucose, sucrose
Starch: 8%
Triterpene glycosides principally xylosides actein (aglycone: acetylacteol) and cimicifugoside (aglycone: cimigenol), also called cimigoside. 27-desoxyacetylacteol and other aglycones have also been isolated. A cyclopropane ring is a feature of these compounds which are structurally related to cycloartenol.
Isoflavones, of which formononetin has been isolated.
Aromatic acids including isoferulic acid and salicylic acid.
Others: tannins, resin, fatty acids, starch and sugars.

Volatile oils .1-.4%
Fixed oils and resins: 3-5%
Saturated fatty acid palmitic
Unsaturated fatty acid oleic
Astringent compounds
Tannins: Isoferulic acid (pseudotannin, astringent, possibly diuretic), Salicylic acid (irritant, analgesic), Gallic acid (astringent)
Bitter compounds
Saponins (Triterpene glycosides actein, cimigoside)

Pharmacology:

Contains substances with endocrine activity causing a selective reduction of the serum concentration of pituitary luteinizing hormone (LH) and/or able to bind to estrogen receptors of rat uteri. Constituents with these actions are not fully identified but formononetin is involved. It is assumed that triterpene glycosides such as cimicifugoside have an effect on the hypothalamus-pituitary system, leading to secondary effects on the reproductive and central peripheral nervous systems. Salicylic acid is so irritating it is used to remove warts.

Therapeutics:

Antispasmodic	**alterative**	**emmenagogue**	**diuretic**
astringent	**expectorant**	**cardiac**	**stimulant**
diaphoretic	**arterial and nervine sedative**	**stomachic-tonic**	**antiseptic**
antivenom.			

Actions:

Endocrine: pituitary, estrogen-mimetic) activity
Emmenagogue
Antirheumatic

As a cardiac stimulant, slightly depresses heart rate while increases force of the pulse and equalizes circulation.
Valuable emmenagogue in pelvic disturbances and uterine troubles, effectively contracts uterus and increases menstrual flow.
Strong effect on muscular system, used for various forms of rheumatism, arthritis, neuralgia
Viable expectorant for acute chronic pulmonary and bronchial affections.
Exerts tonic influence over mucous and serous tissues, stimulating secretions of liver, kidneys, lymph.
Aids digestion.
In parturition, helpful in initiating uterine contractions, checking hemorrhage and allaying nervousness and afterpains of delivery.
Circulations the qi and loosens constraint. Relaxes and restores the nerve, frees spasms, calms wind, relieves pain and calms the spirit. Relieves coughing.
Tonifies the yin. Clears heat, Reduces inflammation and relieves irritability. Restores the urogenital organs. Arrests discharge and bleeding.
Causing sweating, releases the exterior and scatters wind heat. Promotes urination. Resolves fever and pushes out eruptions.
Stimulates uterus, promotes menstruation and contractions and enhances deliver. Relaxes the uterus and harmonizes labor.
Removes stagnancy and awakens the appetite.

Indications:

Menopausal disorders	premenstrual complaints
dysmenorrhoea	uterine spasm, troubles, hemorrhage
insomnia	headache (back of head, base of brain)
rheumatism	chorea
amenorrhea	spinal irritation
pelvic disturbances	whooping cough
cholera	periodical convulsive fits
epilepsy	nervous excitability
asthma	tremors of delirium
spasmodic affections	consumption
cough	scrofula
neuralgia	hysteria
bronchitis	dyspepsia
lumbago	peritonitis
seminal emissions	nerve inflammation
ulcers	dropsy
spinal meningitis	liver/kidney troubles

poisonous insect and snake bites

Other Uses:

For Rheumatism/Arthritis:

Muscular rheumatism,rheumatoid arthritis
Internally most common is the treatment of rheumatism and pulmonary conditions.
Uric Acid diathesis, arthritis

For Wounds:

Used externally to heal sores and puncture wounds.

For nerves:

Qi constraint with nerve deficiency or excess: emotional and nervous tension in all conditions.
Stomach qi constraint: nervous indigestion.
Yin deficiency: restlessness, afternoon flushing or fever, insomnia, irritability.

For Respiratory:

Lung qi constraint: nervous dry cough, asthmatic breathing.
Asthma, especially spasmodic, with Yin deficiency or heat.
Bronchial conditions acute and chronic with coughing and pain.
Internally most common is the treatment of rheumatism and pulmonary conditions.
Lung heat dryness & lung Yin deficiency: dry painful cough, feverishness, thirst
Lung TB, Pleurisy, bronchitis.
Lung wind heat: dry cough with scanty sticky sputum, fever
Pneumonia, croup, whooping cough

For Heart:

Heart qi constraint: palpitations, nervousness
High Blood Pressure.
Heart & Kidney yin deficiency with genitourinary qi deficiency: fatigue, lumbar pain, premature ejaculation, agitation
Rheumatic Carditis

For Urinary:

Kidney qi constraint with internal wind: unrest, colicky pains in abdomen, spasms, trembling.
Heart & Kidney yin deficiency with genitourinary qi deficiency: fatigue, lumbar pain, premature ejaculation, agitation

For Spasms:
Chorea, epilepsy.
For Menstruation:
Uterus qi constrain: painful menstruation with varying flow, irritability, fatigue
Urogenital discharges including leucorrhea, spermatorrhea, gonorrhea
Uterine Hemorrhage, intermenstrual bleeding in deficiency conditions.
Uterus blood and qi deficiency: painful, short, delayed or stopped menses, dry skin & hair, joint pains
Estrogen Insufficiency menstrual and menopausal conditions.
Uterus Qi stagnation: painful delayed or irregular clotted menses, fibroids
Spasmodic dysmenorrhea, PMS
Pain:
Of neuralgia due to cold or heat, with fever or inflammation.
Of uterus during pregnancy, during or after labor, around ovulation or menstruation.
Due to acute or chronic muscular rheumatism with wind/damp/cold obstruction, esp. in chest & back.
Due to sciatica, neuritis, arthritis with lithemia, rheumatic fever.
Due to spinal irritation, with or without inflammation
At onset of flu or fever.
Ears:
Tinnitus.
Flu/Fevers:
External wind heat: onset of flu or fever with aching muscles, fever, unrest, chills
High Fever, eruptive fevers, e.g. measles, smallpox.
For Labour:
Prophylactic & remedial in the last three weeks of pregnancy and during labor
Slow, difficult painful labor with irregular hypertonic contractions
Stalled Labor
Uterine subinvolution, retained placenta
Other:
Snake & Insect bites
promotes cleansing, antidotes poison

Contraindications and Cautions:

Not during Pregnancy, except for uterine or mammary pain, until THREE WEEKS BEFORE DUE DELIVERY. It is an excellent childbirth preparer in women prone to the above patterns of disharmony. It is also said to be "diagnostic agent to differentiate between spurious and true labor pains, the latter being increased, while the former are dissipated under its use. During labor it is a relaxant oxytocic parturient like lobelia, encouraging regular, strong contractions while calming the spirit and easing pain. Black cohosh has also been successfully used to help shrink the uterus after birth and therefore lessen postpartum bleeding; it may also relieve postpartum pain.
Occasional gastro-intestinal disturbances due to the salicylic acid. Overdoses are easily identified by nausea and headache.
CAUTION: Large doses of Black Cohosh can cause poisoning.

Preparation:

Fluid extract, infusion, powder, solid extract, syrup and tincture.
Alcohol is best menstruum to extract the antispasmodic properties.
Tincture or fluid extract are superior to the decoction.

Dosage:

Christopher:

A very potent agent. An overdose will produce nausea and vomiting.
Fluid extract: 5-30 drops
Infusion(tea): 1 tsp every 30 minutes to 3 Tbsp every 3 hours according to need.
Powder: 5 grains 3 times daily
Solid Extract: 1-3 grains
Syrup: 1 dessertspoonful to 1 Tbsp 3-4 times daily
Tincture: 1/2 to 1 fluid dram

Administration:

Black Cohosh syrup can be used as a base for alterative compounds.

Oral:

Cough, whooping cough, liver, kidney troubles: give syrup form
Dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea: give warm infusion of equal parts of black cohosh and blue cohosh.
Colic, convulsions, nerve troubles: give syrup form
Insomnia, headache, indigestion, bronchitis: give infusion in small doses.
High blood pressure, heart palpitation, hemorrhage, uterine contractions: give full dose of infusion.

Black Cohosh Decoction

Add 2 tsp. dried rootstock to 1 pint of water, boil and let cool. Give 2 to 3 tbsp. up to six times a day.

Black Cohosh Tincture

Soak 2 to 3 oz. powdered or finely chopped rootstock in 8 to 12 oz. Vodka (or stronger) for 3-4 weeks shaking the jar 1 or 2 times a day. Strain, give 5 drops 3 to 4 times a day.

WILD YAM

Dioscorea villosa L.

Family: DIOSCOREACEAE





Synonyms: Colic root, Devil's-bones, China root, colic root, rheumatism root, yuma, wild yamwurzel, liver root, dioscorea.

Parts Used: root or rhizome. Although related botanically to the edible yam or sweet potato, the roots of wild yam (*Dioscorea villosa*) are not eaten. They are, however, a valuable estrogenic medicinal herb. The roots were used by American natives for the labour pain, and they were made into traditional remedies for gastrointestinal ailments and asthma. The roots are a source of diosgenin, a valuable pharmaceutical raw material for the manufacture of corticosteroids and contraceptives.

Taste: Disagreeable root taste. Starchy and insipid, afterwards acrid. Sweet, bitter, warm

Odor: None

Found: Native to Mexico. Wild yam is a climbing woodland plant, also native to the eastern half of North America, being found in woods and thickets and forest edges from as far south as Florida to Ontario and Quebec. It is a hardy perennial vine that climbs on trees reaching as much as 3 meters (10 feet). It prefers rich woodland soil and filtered or partial sun exposure. damp woodlands, thickets, New England west to Minnesota, south to Georgia and Texas.

GROWING: Perennial vine whose woolly, reddish-brown stems climbs up to 20 feet long. Small greenish-yellow flowers bloom June-July. Bruit is 3 winged capsule containing winged seeds. The rootstock is the part used. It runs horizontally underneath the surface of the ground. The roots rarely exceed 1 cm (1/2") thickness.

Little is known about the optimum conditions for growing wild yam. Most of the crude drug in the botanicals trade is from wildcrafted materia. Each root comes with several 'eyes' that can be broken off and planted individually. As many as a dozen or more eyes can be separated from one root. Or, the roots can be planted intact without separation, if the goal is to get quicker establishment of vines. Wild yam eyes or roots may be planted anytime in fall until the ground freezes. The site should be well-drained, with humus-rich soil. Plant eyes or roots 5-7 cm (2-3") deep and 30-90 cm (1-3 feet) apart, or more if space permits. The vines will climb, so the site has to be positioned close to bushes, trees or a trellis where the vines can twine around.

Wild yam prefers moist conditions, so keep watered until the plants have reached 30cm (1ft.) and are well established. Fertilizer is not required if growing in rich woodland soil.

Wild yam eyes can also be planted in pots or in flats and overwintered in a coldframe, and then planted outdoors the following spring.

In northern areas (USDA zones 4-6) a mulch of leaves should be applied to protect the roots from being lifted out of the ground during periods of late winter freezing and thawing.

The roots are harvested in autumn, They may be dug up in the third or later year and dried. Leave behind some roots or eyes for continuous future growth

HISTORY:

During the 18th and 19th century wild yam was used to treat menstrual pain and conditions related to childbirth. Pregnant women used wild yam for nausea, helping with muscle aches and preventing miscarriages. It was also used for colic. The plant's anti-inflammatory properties were thought to be effective in treating rheumatoid arthritis. This is all but forgotten until 1936 when Japanese researchers found that wild yam contained diosgenin, a chemical used in the 1940's to create synthetic progesterone and DHEA hormone. The scientist (Russell Marker) worked with the species of Mexican yams. Other people also used his technique for making progesterone to develop birth control pills and steroid drugs. Finally in the 1990's companies began marketing Mexican yam products as a source of natural progesterone and DHEA. Those products also were marketed for menstrual problems and osteoporosis and sometimes used as a replacement for hormone therapy during menopause. Also progesterone is said to fall during the last half of the month, so using Wild Yam could bring up the hormone to help a woman conceive. Many came out against this marketing as a scam.

PRESENT DAY

Although the Mexican yam cream doesn't provide natural progesterone, the herb can be used for cramping conditions like menstrual pain. It helps build up good cholesterol levels and helps poor circulation, nervousness, restlessness. The tea is still being marketed as helping a woman conceive.

The yam cream is marketed with the promise that it is natural progesterone, the cream being applied to the skin in small dosages.

Areas affected:

Liver, gallbladder, kidneys, spleen-pancreas

Constituents:

Steroidal saponins, mainly diosgenin; these are hormone precursors, especially of progesterone and other cortical steroids.

Therapeutics:

Relieve pains of childbirth, diuretic, emetic in large doses, expectorant, remedy for colic, muscle spasms (relaxes muscular fibers, soothes nerves

Especially for Rheumatism

Soothing to the nerves and beneficial for neuralgia and pains in urinary tract.

Considered one of the best anti-catarrhal agents, valuable in pulmonary and catarrhal conditions.

Actions:

ANTISPASMODIC
anti-inflammatory
cholagogue
diaphoretic
expectorant

Mexican yam can be combined with other herbs to treat a range of conditions. The following conditions can be treated by these combination remedies:

- **Menstrual cramps can be treated with a tea made with wild yam and cramp bark . Those herbs can also be blended into a tea with such herbs as motherwort, fresh oats, and chamomile.**
- **Relief for rheumatoid arthritis may come from a combination of wild yam and black cohosh.**
- **For kidney stones, wild yam can be combined in a tea with such herbs as cramp bark, hydrangea root, and yarrow.**

Pharmacology:

Dioscorea species are important source of diosgenin used by pharmaceutical industry in the manufacture of birth control pills and certain other steroid drugs. Steroidlike properties of wild yam may account for its effectiveness in treating rheumatism and similar inflammatory diseases.

Indications:

Used for biliary colic, pains of gallstones, menstrual cramps, arthritic and rheumatic pains, abdominal and intestinal cramps.

Also good for chronic problems associates with gas or flatulence.

For chronic liver problems and chronic gas, combine two parts wild yam root, one part Oregon grape or barberry root and 1/2 part each of fennel seeds and ginger. Take as tea or powder after meals.

For gallstones, combine equal parts wild yam root, fringe tree bark, Oregon grape or barberry root, turmeric root and marshmallow root. Take as tea simmering one ounce of combination in a pint of boiling water. It can also be taken as a powder, taking 2-4 "00" size gelatin tablets every hour or two, tapering off as symptoms subside. If after 12 hours symptoms have not subsided, consider seeking professional help.

During pregnancy, small frequent doses will help allay nausea

Preparation:

Decoction, fluid extract, powder and tincture.

Furthermore, although wild yam root tea has been suggested as a method for a woman to become pregnant, the herb should not be used during the last half of a menstrual period

Congenial combinations:

With other uterine agents, acts as a uterine tonic and antispasmodic during pregnancy.

When using wild yam as a uterine agent, combine it with ginger. For the pulmonary and stomach areas, combine with cayenne and goldenseal etc.

Dosage: (daily)

Decoction (strong): 1 dessertspoonful to 1 wineglassful in water 3 -4 times daily, between meals[Christopher]

Standard decoction or 3-9 grams

Fluid extract: 1/2 to 1 fluid dram

Powder herb: see instructions on labels

Infusion: steep 1 tsp root in 1 cup water 30 minutes. Take 1 cup in the course of the day, a mouthful at a time.

Mexican yam is sold as a powdered herb, liquid extract, tincture, and in capsule form. While there are general dosage recommendations for wild yam, instructions on commercial packages should be followed since product strength can vary.

Wild yam tea, which is also known as an infusion, is made by pouring 1 cup (240 mL) of boiling water over 1–2 tsp (1.5–2.5 g) of the dried herb. The mixture is steeped for 10–15 minutes and then strained. Wild yam tea can be drunk three times a day.

A tincture of wild yam in an alcohol solution can be taken 3–4 times a day. A single dosage consists of 2–3 ml (approximately 1.2 tsp) of wild yam.

Wild yam capsules contain the dried root. The average dosage is 1–2 pills, taken three times daily.

Administration:

Oral:

Dysmenorrhea: wild yam decoction with small quantity of ginger as a diffusive stimulant.
Emesis: wild yam decoction in large doses.
Colic, abdominal and intestinal irritation, spasms, spasmodic asthma, vomiting and hepatic congestion: take 1 tbsp warm decoction every 30 minutes until relieved.
Liver affections, rheumatic pains, spasms: 1-3 cupfuls of cold wild yam decoction during the day. Mix this well with saliva, one mouthful at a time.
Rheumatism, bronchitis, spasms, asthma, whooping cough, liver congestion, nausea of pregnancy, jaundice, bilious colic: use strong decoction.

Strong Decoction of Wild Yam:

2 oz Wild yam cut
1 quart distilled water
4 oz glycerine
Preparation: Put herb and water in an appropriate vessel and boil slowly for 20 minutes. Strain, return to the clean vessel and reduce by simmering to 3/4 pint. Remove the mixture from the heat and add the glycerine. Let stand until cool, bottle, and keep in a cool place. The sweetening may be added while hot, or th dosage may be taken plain or in honey water.
Dosage: 1 dessertspoonful to 1 tbsp in water 3-4 times daily, between meals.
1 wineglassful may be taken in severe cases.
Children: 1 tsp or more, according to age and condition.

CAUTION:

Large doses may cause vomiting, poisoning.
Mexican wild yam is safe if taken within prescribed therapeutic dosages.

Pregnant and nursing women, as well as patients with hormone imbalances, depression, or hormone-sensitive cancers should avoid wild yam unless they are under the guidance of a clinical herbalist or physician.