

From our friends at "Back to Herbs"



eFlash



Buckthorn Bark

Other names: (Rhamnus Frangula), Alder Dogwood, Arraclán, Arrow Wood, Black Dogwood, Buckthorn, Buckthorn Bark, Dog Wood, Frángula, Frangula, Frangula Alnus, Frangula Bark, Frangulae Cortex, Glossy Buckthorn, Nerprun Bourdaie.

Buckthorn is a bush that can be found in everglades, forests and groves. It is a shrub indigenous to Europe and western parts of Asia. This particular shrub is believed to have contributed in large part to the fields of medicine and science.

Buckthorn refers to four species of plants: rhamnus cathartica, rhamnus purshiana, rhamnus frangula and hippophae rhamnoides. Herbalists use the first three species of this genus to produce buckthorn supplements. The buckthorn varieties used in health supplements are commonly known as Common Buckthorn, Californian Buckthorn and Alder Buckthorn.



Only the buckthorn bark is used for medicinal purposes. Traditionally, it was used to dye cloths yellow. Its bark tea was used as an abstergent (cleansing or scouring). In Apuseni Mountains, in Salciua, the bark decoct was administered to those who fell ill from stress, madness, curses or bad thoughts. It has been used medicinally since at least the 1600s, when it was listed in a primary medical reference called the London Pharmacopoeia. Although most herbs have had a wide variety of traditional uses, later refined to a single or a few proven benefits, buckthorn bark throughout its history has been consistently used to relieve one ailment: constipation and its by-products (hemorrhoids and anal irritation).

The bark contains a mixture of compounds called anthraquinones. Because these compounds are powerful, before being processed into laxative products the bark is aged for a year, or heated and dried. Anthraquinone derivatives (anthranoids- these substances are the constituents of some plants and their extracts, they are often referred to as vegetable laxatives) of which the majority is present as glycosides (compound containing a carbohydrate [sugar] molecule). The maxim amount of substances is accumulated during springtime. The total content of anthranoids is 2 to 6%. The anthraquinones, which remain in the intestines and irritate the intestinal wall, are thought to help stimulate elimination. The glycosides, which are absorbed into the intestine and bloodstream and go on to stimulate the lower intestine, are also thought to help serve in the mild elimination process. Buckthorn bark is listed in both the British Pharmacopoeia and the Unites States pharmacopoeia for its mild cathartic (purgative or laxative effect) properties.

Studies show that buckthorn has several health benefits:

Buckthorn can help soothe the function of the digestive tract and treat digestive disorders, like constipation, acid reflux and irregular bowel movements. Buckthorn, in moderate amounts helps relieve constipation, as well as hemorrhoid and anal fissure. Individuals who experience digestive problems tpically retain water or gain water. Buckthorn helps to

eliminate waste and toxin due to its diuretic effects. Additionally, it can to reduce stomach bloating. Buckthorn bark enhances the ability of the colon to spontaneously contract. Additionally, it decreases water absorption by the intestines leaving more water in the colon producing a larger volume and softer stool, which eases constipation. In fact, doctors sometimes use the plant to cleanse the colon prior to gastrointestinal surgery. As a result, colon contractions improve bowel movements. Buckthorn contains 1,8-dihydroxy-anthracene compounds. It soothes the nerves in the intestinal tract that can contract and prevent bowel movements. The bark of the buckthorn is effective in cases of both chronic constipation caused by inadequate liquids, poor diet, and the abuse of purgatives, which results in the loss of natural reflexes.

It can relax the intestinal muscles and it has vermifuge properties (medicine that expels intestinal worms). The fruits contain vitamins, mineral substances and fat acids and they have an antioxidant, protective and regenerator action. Buckthorn is also recommended for liver insufficiency in association with other herbs like dandelion. It is used in the treatment of liver disorders and especially for the treatment of constipation caused by bile insufficiency. Buckthorn has also choleric effects stimulating the liver to increase output of bile. The herb is thought to be helpful in treating various liver disorders such as cirrhosis. It also increases the flow of bile, which helps with a sluggish gallbladder, and it can help the body eliminate gallstones.

Buckthorn may help treat skin disorders related to constipation such as psoriasis, allergic eczema, and acne.

Also, buckthorn has been used to treat giardia, rheumatism, headaches followed by allergies, hepatitis, and obesity.

Externally, the bark has antiseptic properties that help alleviate gum disease and scalp afflictions.

Alder buckthorn is safe for most adults. Seek the advice of a health care provider.

The fresh bark can cause severe vomiting. Make sure you are using a bark product that is at least one year old or has been heat processed. Buckthorn is UNSAFE for children younger than 12 years of age.

Do not take alder buckthorn if any of the following apply: pregnant or breast-feeding, blockage in the intestine, an intestinal disorder such as appendicitis, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), or ulcerative colitis, stomach pain or diarrhea.

Buckthorn does have possible interactions with certain medications. Be cautious in taking buckthorn with the following due to possible potassium depletion and/or dehydration. Talk with your health provider first.

- Other stimulant laxatives
- Corticosteroids
- Warfarin
- "Water pills"



Be sure to try NSP's LBS II® (100 caps), BP-X® (100 caps) or LB Extract (2 fl. oz.).

References:

http://www.ehow.com/list_6785064_benefits-buckthorn.html

<http://benefitof.net/benefits-of-buckthorn/>

http://www.wholehealthmd.com/ME2/dirmod.asp?sid=&nm=Reference+Library&type=AWHN_Supplements&mod=Supplements&mid=&id=FAE21A59B84143CA9DB276B7D0BCF078&tier=2

<http://www.liveandfeel.com/medicinalplants/buckthorn.html>

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Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

Chris Ritchason

Dr. Jack & Verlyn Ritchason, Founders

The Back to Herbs Team

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