



Slippery Elm

Scientific names: Ulmus rubra. Also known as Ulmus fulva.

Common names: Slippery elm also is known as red elm, Indian elm, moose elm, and sweet elm.

The slippery elm tree is native to eastern Canada and eastern and central US, where it is found most commonly in the Appalachian Mountains. Slippery elm's inner bark is comprised of different nutrients like campestral, beta-sitosterol, calcium, tannin, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, manganese, selenium, potassium, beta-carotene zinc, and vitamins B2, B1, B3 and C.



Slippery elm has been used as an herbal remedy in North America for centuries. Native Americans used slippery elm in healing salves for wounds, boils, ulcers, burns, and skin inflammation. It was also taken orally to relieve coughs, sore throats, diarrhea, and stomach problems.

Slippery elm contains mucilage; a substance that becomes a slick gel when mixed with water. It coats and soothes the mouth, throat, stomach, and intestines; it also contains antioxidants that help relieve inflammatory bowel conditions. Slippery elm also causes reflux stimulation of nerve endings in the gastrointestinal tract leading to increased mucus secretion. The increased mucus production may protect the gastrointestinal tract against ulcers and excess acidity.

Benefits of Slippery Elm

Slippery elm is a demulcent, emollient, expectorant, and diuretic. Demulcent

means that it is soothing, softening, buffering, and has poison-drawing qualities. This herb has a number of health benefits. It helps to neutralize stomach acids, boost the adrenal glands, draw out impurities, and heal all parts of the body. The mucilage coats the mouth, esophagus, and gastrointestinal tract with a slick residue. It soothes the inflammation of ulcers in the stomach and duodenum and helps to provide a barrier between the ulcer and stomach acid. It soothes irritations or ulcerations in the stomach and intestines and is good for helping with gastrointestinal conditions.

Slippery elm can help to soothe a sore throat, alleviate the pain of colic or stomach ulcers, and relieve inflammatory bowel conditions. Slippery elm helps with [digestion](#) and cleanses the colon. It is particularly helpful for easing a cough and soothing a sore throat as it coats the area and reduces irritation. Slippery elm is a tonic that benefits the adrenal glands, respiratory system, and the gastrointestinal tract. Used topically, slippery elm can relieve minor injuries such as burns, cold sores, razor burns, scrapes, and sunburn.

Slippery elm inner bark is very rich in mucilage, a complex mixture of polysaccharides that form a soothing gelatinous fiber when water is added. Historically, the pleasant tasting high fiber 'gruel' or porridge made by adding water to the bark was traditionally used as both a food and a medicine by First Nations peoples, and later by European colonists. The mucilage was traditionally used internally for soothing sore throats and tonsillitis, coughs, dryness of the lungs and digestive upsets, and externally for healing wounds and other skin inflammations. Slippery elm tree bark and root bark were also used as folk remedies for treating many serious degenerative diseases. The bark is particularly recommended for soothing gastric diseases. The viscous fiber has several beneficial effects on digestion:

1. it reduces bowel transit time;
2. it absorbs toxins from the bowel;
3. it increases fecal bulk and dilutes stool materials thereby reducing stool contact with the intestinal mucosa; and
4. it enhances beneficial bacteria in the gut and provides an excellent substrate for bacterial fermentation.
5. Eliminating estrogenic anaerobes from the gut can significantly help the body to regain critical hormone balances that are required for basic health. The bark has noted anti-inflammatory activity and because the mucilage resists hydrolysis and digestion by stomachs acids and enzymes, it therefore maintains its soothing action throughout the entire digestive system. Slippery elm bark mucilage also helps to moisten the throat, nasal passages, and lungs. Slippery elm bark was also traditionally used for treating abscesses, dysentery, urinary conditions and fever. Poultices were traditionally used to support bone and joint health, reduce swollen glands and stop the spread of infections.

Traditional Usage:

- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Breathing Disorders
- Cellular Regeneration
- Cleansing
- Constipation
- Detoxifying
- Diarrhea
- Digestive Upsets
- Diverticulitis
- Endotoxic Shock (Bacterial Infection Toxemia)
- Gastritis
- Hemorrhoids/Piles
- Hormone Imbalances
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Poultice
- Reducing LDL Cholesterol
- Sore Throat

There has been little scientific research on slippery elm, but it is often suggested for the following conditions:

- Sore throat
- Cough
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis
- Diarrhea

Asthma

Bronchitis Constipation Wounds, burns, boils, psoriasis, and other skin conditions (external) Abscesses Burns Diaper Rash

Available forms of slippery elm include the following:

- Tablets and capsules
- Lozenges
- Finely powdered bark for making teas or extracts
- Coarsely powdered bark for poultices

Precautions:

The use of herbs is a time-honored approach to strengthening the body and treating disease. Unlike many forms of alternative medicine, the use of medicinal herbs and plants is widely considered by the medical community to have a

scientific basis and even plays an important role in the formulation of many medications and dietary supplements. Therefore, herbs can trigger side effects and can interact with other herbs, supplements, or medications. For these reasons, many herbs should be taken with care, under the supervision of a health care provider. Slippery elm has no serious side effects. Because it coats the digestive tract, it may slow down the absorption of other drugs or herbs. It is suggested that slippery elm be taken 2 hours before or after other herbs or medications you may be taking.

Scientists think slippery elm is safe in pregnancy and during breast-feeding, but no scientific studies have been done to confirm this. The outer bark of the elm tree, however, may contain substances that could increase the risk of miscarriage, so sometimes pregnant women are advised to avoid slippery elm.

Possible Interactions:

There are no scientific reports of slippery elm interacting with any other medications, although it may slow down the absorption of other drugs or herbs.

Nature's Sunshine Slippery Elm is available in capsule form as well as in bulk form. **It may help to relieve occasional digestive discomfort and provides mucilage, which may soothe the throat and digestive tract.**



Mucilage is an easily digestible long chain of sugars (polysaccharides) that make a slippery substance when combined with water. **Historically, early American settlers used slippery elm as a survival food;** George Washington and his troops survived for several days on slippery elm gruel during the bitter winter at Valley Forge.

It may also be used externally as a poultice for the skin. Each capsule contains 360 mg slippery elm bark. For more great NSP Products that contain slippery elm (like Stomach Comfort and All Cell Detox),

Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

Chris Ritchason
Dr. Jack & Verlyn Ritchason, Founders
The Back to Herbs Team

References

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