



Goldenseal Root

Botanical Name: *Hydrastis canadensis*

Family: Ranunculaceae

Part Used: Root

Native to eastern North America, goldenseal grows in rich and shaded woodlands, particularly in the Carolinas, the Appalachian mountains, the Virginias and Tennessee and grows sparsely in the New England states. It is on the endangered list now due to overharvesting and should not be taken from the wild, though it is available and cultivated organically in the Pacific Northwest. The name *Hydrastis* is derived from the Greek word *hydor* meaning water and *aste* refers to the moist places it grows in.

Written information on goldenseal root dates back to the 1600s when Native Americans chewed on it for mouth ulcers. It's so amazingly bitter, I can't imagine doing so. Native Americans gave it a common name of "yellow root" and rightfully so. The root is such a vivid yellow that one touch to bare skin will leave a deep stain of golden yellow that will last for days.

Goldenseal's properties are: bitter, stimulant, astringent, alterative, diuretic, antiseptic, emmenagogue, hepatonic, antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, anti-malarial, anti-infective.

The systems affected are: digestive, respiratory, glandular and circulatory.

Goldenseal root is high in vitamin C, zinc, cobalt, iron, silicon, magnesium and manganese with moderate amounts of vitamins A and E as well as dietary fiber. It contains many isoquinoline alkaloids (medically

active alkaloids) including berberine, hydrastine, canadine, and l-hydrastine, which are anti-microbial and deliver the antibiotic, anti-infective properties of the root that are also immune stimulating.

I have used goldenseal powdered root topically with animals on open wounds as a strong topical antibiotic, and it also helps scabs to form, preventing further infection as well as clearing any existing infection.

It's a favorite herb of mine to use for eye issues in dogs and horses including conjunctivitis, infections from a foreign object or an allergy as well as undiagnosed goopy eyes, especially where a yellow discharge is involved. For this I make a tea by using a small amount – about 1 teaspoon of the chopped root to 16 oz distilled water. Bring to a light boil for 20 to 30 mins then simmer very low for 1 to 2 hours. I use a very fine mesh strainer to be sure all plant parts are removed leaving only clean liquid and put it in a glass bottle with dropper. This can be kept in a refrigerator for 5 to 9 days or you can add 35 percent sterile saline to use and store for up to 30 days. I use 2 to 5

drops for each infected eye for 3 to 10 days, depending on the size of the dog and the severity of the infection.

Goldenseal root has intense medicine, so a little goes a long way. It blends well with usnea, Oregon grape root, neem leaf or cat's claw in tincture form for internal healing of the respiratory system. It is very helpful for most urinary tract infections, is anti-infectious in mucous membranes (throat, sinuses, gastrointestinal (GI) tract, mouth and bronchial airway), increases bile production, aids in digestion and is considered a strong anti-diarrheal in cases of salmonella or E. coli (due to its berberine content). In the case of giardia, it can be used as a preventative or treatment as it is anti-protozoan.

Very small doses should be used when taken internally. As a single herb, goldenseal root may cause nausea or irritate the GI tract in sensitive animals. Blending other herbs will eliminate this worry but it should always be the lower portion of the formula. 🌿

Caution: Not for use in pregnancy as it stimulates contraction of the uterus.



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