

Goldenseal, *Hydrastis canadensis*

Goldenseal In the wild, goldenseal grows up from the forest floor in late April. Small white flowers bloom in the middle of the leaf. With only two large, five-lobed, serrated leaves growing on a one foot stem, it bears a raspberry-like fruit in July. Goldenseal has many medicinal uses, and that is in fact its most common use. Growing Info: Goldenseal grows naturally on the floors of forests, therefore it needs a shady location to grow. It is beginning to become threatened in the wild, which is just another good reason to include it in your garden. Plant several of these perennials to make a community. Will grow to about 1 foot tall. Loves rich, moist soil with plenty of organic material worked in. The thick, knotty, yellow rootstock can be harvested after three years of growth. Standard Uses: While goldenseal could be considered a worthy ornamental plant for a forest like garden setting, it's primary use has been for its medicinal values. Medicinal Uses: Goldenseal contains hydrastine and berberine which give it antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, alternative laxative and tonic properties. It has been traditionally used for such ailments as eye inflammations, cancer, high blood pressure, skin and liver diseases. CAUTION: Those with hypoglycemia should avoid taking the root internally, but can safely use it as a mouthwash, eyewash or douche. Pregnant women should avoid using goldenseal until they have delivered. It should also not be used for more than two months at a time as it can interfere with the colon's ability to manufacture vitamin B. Some holistic physicians use a solution of goldenseal root for various eye ailments, especially conjunctivitis. Mix together 1/8 teaspoon each of powdered goldenseal root, comfrey and chamomile, add to one cup of boiling water and steep it for 15 minutes before straining through a sterile cheesecloth. Can then be used at room temperature by applying 2-3 drops three times daily from a sterile eye dropper. The berberine that goldenseal contains makes it excellent for treating inflammations of the cornea and iris brought on by the herpes simplex virus. A similar solution as described above is used, but with an increased portion of 1/4 teaspoon of goldenseal. Yeast infections can be treated by combining 3 cups of water and 1-1/2 teaspoons of powdered goldenseal root in a blender. The mixture is then used as a douche several times a day until the problem is cleared up. Any kind of sores in the mouth, gums or tongue can be healed by making a simple mouthwash with a pinch of goldenseal powder and baking soda in a little water. For those with poison ivy rashes, goldenseal powder (1tspn) can be combined in a pint of hot water and be dabbed on the effected areas when cool. Also 2-3 capsules of root powder taken internally will expedite the healing process as well. Some diabetics have reported that they are able to reduce their dependency on insulin as a result of taking goldenseal capsules. Some people use the following method to relieve sinus miseries. Take a shaker of salt and put about 20 or so grains into the palm of your hand, adding a pinch or two of goldenseal powder and enough filtered water to form a liquid paste. Then sniff the mixture up your nose and you'll get almost instantly relief as the mixture reaches your mucus membranes. Goldenseal is also being used by alternative care doctors and holistic healers who use various preparations of this and other herbs to treat drug addictions. They first cleanse the body of the offending toxins, then use another specific preparation to deal with the physical withdrawal symptoms, and finally a third mixture to rebuild the body through sound nutrition. Research data that appeared in the Chinese Pharmacological Bulletin (1994) indicated that the berberine in goldenseal "markedly inhibited clot retraction". Those who are prone to strokes of frequent clot formations (that don't have hypoglycemia) may benefit from a goldenseal root capsule every other day. Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*)

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