



Bayberry

Stock #60-6 (100 capsules)

Bayberry (*Myrica cerifera*) root bark has long been utilized in folk medicine for its antibiotic, antipyretic (fever-reducing) and, in high doses, emetic (induce vomiting) effects. Bayberry's antibiotic properties are the result of the presence of *myricitrin*, a flavonoid glycoside that acts as a toxic agent against bacteria, paramecia and sperm. Myricitrin has also been shown to stimulate bile secretion.¹⁻⁴

Bayberry bark's rich tannin content makes this herb an effective astringent and offers explanation for its folk use in treating diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome and especially mucous colitis. Bayberry is also reported to possess circulatory stimulant and mild diaphoretic (increase perspiration) properties.¹⁻⁶

The combination of its effects enables bayberry to strengthen local resistance to infection and effectively tighten and dry mucous membranes. Thus, bayberry has long been employed as a natural remedy for colds and coughs, excess mucus, fevers and influenza.

Nineteenth-century physicians often prescribed a hot tea made from powdered bayberry bark at the first sign of a cold, cough or flu—the tea is an excellent decongestant and expectorant and helps to “sweat out” a cold. Bayberry is also an effective mouthwash for tightening “spongy” gums and for soothing sore, bleeding gums. Furthermore, gargling with bayberry can ease the discomfort of a sore throat.^{4,6-9}

Regarded as both warming and astringent in nature, bayberry has been recommended for fever management associated with diarrhea and dysentery. In addition, bayberry's astringent effects have been utilized to treat excessive menstruation and vaginal discharge. Bayberry may also be helpful for arthritic, skin and other inflammatory diseases—a paste made from the powdered root can be applied to help soothe and heal itching skin conditions, sores and ulcers. Furthermore, bayberry is one of the oldest remedies for hemorrhoids, and when rubbed on the skin, can be used to reduce the swelling or discomfort of varicose veins.^{1,3,4,6-8}

Large doses of bayberry can trigger vomiting, and are used as an emetic, especially to treat cases of poisoning. According to the *Physician's Desk Reference for Herbal Medicines*, no health hazards or side effects are known for bayberry when used in conjunction with the proper administration of designated therapeutic dosages. Nevertheless, bayberry is not recommended during pregnancy or nursing since the effects are unknown.^{1,3-6}

Large doses of bayberry may also cause typical mineralocorticoid side effects (i.e. sodium and water retention, hypertension) and may interfere with existing hypertensive, hypotensive or steroid therapy. Individuals watching their sodium/potassium intake (i.e. those with kidney disease, high blood pressure or congestive heart failure) should consult their healthcare professional before using bayberry.^{1,5,9,10}

References:

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