

Herbs For Healing Newsletter

The Elderberry: a respected Autumn jewel

In medieval times elder was associated with myth, magic and witchcraft. If you wanted to cut an elder, the ancients advised, you should first ask its permission.

You should certainly never burn the wood of elder in the house. However, making music on a flute made of elder wood would drive away evil spirits.

Elder has a long history of medicinal and culinary use. In the past the bark and the leaves were used, but nowadays mainly the flowers are used, in Spring, and the berries in September and October.



Anti-viral growing in our hedgerows

The dark purple-blue berries, which we find in many gardens and wild in hedgerows, are popular for making wine and juice.

It is advisable to cook them because if eaten raw, they work as a laxative and a diuretic.

They must also be fully ripe.

They contain the vitamins A, B and C, the minerals calcium, iron and potassium, and a high amount of flavonoids, which act as natural immune boosting substances to protect against infections and allergies.

Very interesting is the anti-viral effect of the elderberries. They are a powerful remedy against many different strains of influenza virus.

The flavonoids are antioxidants, which stimulate the immune system. The berries also contain anthocyanins, which have an anti-inflammatory effect.

This might explain the beneficial effect on rheumatic aches and pains and fever.

In 2005 the WHO (World Health Organisation) admitted that Tamiflu as a pharmaceutical flu remedy is not as effective as previously believed.

A better and safer and cheaper alternative is the extract of elderberry in form of juice.

If taken early enough, the juice may even prevent the virus from invading the body.

Find delicious recipes overleaf...



Found some **elderberries**, what now?

Warming Infusion

The flowers drunk as an infusion have a warming effect, they can induce sweating which can help to prevent a chill, a cold or a fever.

Preparation

- Pour a cup of boiling water onto one or two teaspoonful of dried flowers and let infuse for 10 minutes. Drink two or three cups of this as hot as you can bear it.

Prevention is better than a cure!

A study performed at the university of Oslo in Norway in 2002 found that of people infected with the type A strain 90% of the group that received

the berry extract, recovered in less than 3 days.

Those who received the placebo, suffered twice as long.

Elderberry Juice

Preparation

- Boil elderberries without stems and strain through a jelly bag.
- Fill warm clean glass bottles with the juice, close while still warm and label.
- Add sugar and cinnamon but this is not essential.
- Fill the bottles right up to the rim which causes a vacuum to form once the juice has cooled, this helps to prevent mould.

How to use

Fill a glass half full with elder juice, top up with hot water, add a little lemon juice and drink warm.



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