



Sambucus nigra Family: *Adoxaceae*

Properties:

Berries: alterative, anti-inflammatory, diaphoretic, diuretic, expectorant, laxative, aperient, anti-rheumatic, antiviral, antioxidant, nutritive.

Flowers: alterative, anti-inflammatory, diaphoretic, diuretic (cold infusion), demulcent, anti-catarrhal, anti-spasmodic, febrifuge, aperient, vulnerary, cooling (cold infusion).

Beauty and Personal Care:

Use the flowers to make: facial wash, toner (infuse in vinegar or witch hazel), compress, facial steam. Blends well with calendula, lavender and rose petals.

- soothing to the skin
- cools hot skin
- softens skin
- clears the complexion

Medicinal Uses:

Flower

- induces sweating making it perfect for treating fevers
- respiratory congestion and inflammation
- sinusitis, nasal discharge and drainage
- helps rid body of excess mucus
- hay fever and allergies (combine with nettles)
- earache
- sunburn (compress or spritz with cold tea)
- night sweats and hot flashes (use cold tea)



Annie's Place

- promotes urination
- wounds, bruises, burns and swelling
- blood cleansing
- headaches
- upset stomach, nausea, flu
- face wash or toner; softens skin and clears complexion

Berry

- immune booster
- viral infections
- prevention and treatment of cough, cold and flu (winter illnesses)
- herpes
- shingles
- respiratory infections
- sinusitis
- sore throat
- constipation
- rheumatic pain
- cardiovascular tonic
- burns and wounds (smashed berries as a poultice)

Methods of Use:

- tincture, glycerite
- syrup
- honey
- oil
- infusion (elder flowers only steep for about 3-5 minutes)
- compress (flowers)
- poultice (mashed berries)
- bath, foot soak, face steam

In the Kitchen:

- jams, jellies, preserves
- pies
- sodas and juices
- desserts

In the Garden:

- Likes moist, rich soil and part shade to replicate the natural habitat of growing next to rivers and by water in forests. Keep roots moist, although elder will still survive if it gets dry and hot.
- Propagate from a cutting or purchase a transplant from the nursery. Space 5-6 feet apart.
- To harvest the flowers, pick on a dry, sunny day when fully open. They should smell lemony and fresh. Pick the whole head of flowers and dry or use fresh.
- Berries are ripe when they look almost black in color, usually around August and September. They need to be prepared immediately or dried with gentle heat (dehydrator on low).

Caution

There are differing opinions on eating the berries prior to being cooked (raw), they can cause an upset stomach so just to be safe I would suggest only using them cooked. You also want to only use the flower and ripe berries of this plant internally, as the leaves and stems can be toxic.

Disclaimer: The Information contained on this handout is for educational purposes only and as a guideline for your personal use. It is not intended to replace the advice of a licensed physician, herbalist or other trained professional. Those who follow these suggestions do so at their own risk.