SLIPPERY ELM
(Ulmus rubra)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Demulcent
- Emollient
- Nutritive
- Antitussive
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Diuretic
- Expectorant
- Astringent

Indications

- Gastritis, reflux, dyspepsia and gastric or duodenal ulcers
- Irritable and inflammatory bowel diseases
- Colitis, diarrhoea and constipation
- Upper and lower respiratory complaints including bronchitis and throat inflammation
- Convalescence as a nutrient supplement
- Externally it is applied as a poultice for wounds, boils, burns, abscesses and ulcers

Traditional Use

Based on traditional evidence slippery elm is taken internally to relieve the symptoms of gastritis, acid dyspepsia, gastric reflux, peptic ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome and Crohn's disease.

Energetics

Moistening, neutral.

Constituents

Best known for its abundant mucilage consisting of hexoses, pentoses, methylpentoses, at least two polyuronides, and yielding on hydrolysis galactose, glucose and fructose (trace), L-rhamnose, galacturonic acid and D-galactose. The inner bark also contains calcium oxalate, phytosterols (beta-sitosterol, citrostadienol, dolichol), sesquiterpenes, cholesterol and small amounts of tannin (3.0 to 6.5% type unspecified). It also contains a variety of nutritional factors such as iron, vitamin C, thiamine, zinc, magnesium and potassium, providing support for its traditional use as a nutritious gruel.

Use in Pregnancy

It is likely to be safe, but safety is still to be established.

Contraindications and Cautions

None known.

Drug Interactions

Although there are no controlled studies available, theoretically, the herb should be taken away from medications as the mucilage effects on the digestive tract may impede absorption. Separate doses by two hours.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 60% alcohol
40 to 80mL weekly