Native American Botanics

Oshá - Native Herb of the Southwest

Scientific Name
Ligusticum porteri

Botanical Family
Apiaceae

Common Name(s)
Oshá, chuchupate, porter's lovage, bear root, mountain ginseng, nipo, Indian root, mountain carrot, colorado cough root, bear medicine, wild lovage, wild parsley plant

Plant Part Used
Root (taproot)

Overview
Oshá a (*Ligusticum porteri),* also called chuchupate, is native to the high elevations of the southern and central Rocky Mountains. Native American have traditionally used oshá roots to treat sore throats, lung congestion, and other respiratory disorders. Herbalists prescribe this plant as a camphoraceous remedy for reducing spasms, increasing digestion, and increasing perspiration. Although the whole plant is used medicinally, the thick taproots are the most highly valued plant part

Today, some experts in the herbal industry are concerned about increased wildcrafting of oshá. The potential for over-harvesting may threaten the long-term viability of this species. Conservationists and representatives from the health food industry are working together to ensure that oshá is not over-exploited. Native American Botanics supports conservation strategies to conserve our natural resources and encourages horticultural production of herbs for the dietary supplement market.

Botanical Description
Ligusticum porteri is a perennial herb found throughout the American southwest and Rocky Mountains. It grows 20 to 40 inches tall on moist fertile ground and in upland meadows. The plant has elliptical leaves that are divided into “carrot-like” leaflets and 5-petaled white flowers. The long taproot is covered with fibrous hairs. Its distinctive odor and bitter and taste are due to active compounds called phthalides.

Chemical Constituents
Alkaloid, sterols, saponins, lactones (*E*- and *Z*-ligustilides), phthalides, pinenes, furocoumarins, sterols, volatile oil.

Medicinal Uses
Traditional Uses (Root): tonic for colds, flu, bronchial infections, fever, poor digestion, aches and pains.

Clinical Applications (Root): cough, bronchial conditions, fevers painful menstruation, retained placenta**,** fevers, digestive disorders, toothache.

Pharmacological and Clinical Findings
Oshá *(Ligusticum porteri)* is thought to reduce inflammation of the respiratory tract. It appears to counter the loss of moisture during colds and flu by helping to keep mucus in the lungs wet. Compounds in the plant stimulate the cilia on cells of the mucous membranes in the lungs to clear the build up of mucus in the lungs out through the throat. Ligustilide, a lactone reportedly found in *Ligusticum porteri*, stimulates macrophages to produce anti-viral and anti-microbial effects. In clinical trials, *Z*-ligustilide showed antimicrobial activity, presumably by interfering with the life cycles of microbes. Ligustilide also exhibits anti-asthmatic activity.

Dosage Range
Capsules: 450 mg. 3 times a day during infection, or as directed by a qualified healthcare provider.

Safety
Oshá is considered safe for healthy persons when taken in recommended dosages.

Side Effects
None reported

Warnings/Contraindications/Precautions
None reported

Interactions
None reported

References
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