

Usnea barbata
Family: *Usneacea* - lichen
Parts Used: whole lichen

Also known as Old Man's Beard, I'll let you guess why. There are several species of this unique algae/fungus combination, that can be identified by the elastic white thread that grows in the middle. Stephen Buhner lists it as one of the most powerful herbal antibiotics.

Properties

Antibiotic, antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, antimicrobial, vulnerary.

Energetics: cooling, drying
Systems Affected: respiratory

Uses

- Lung support; infections, pleurisy, pneumonia, tuberculosis, bronchitis, etc.
- Colds, flu, fever, sore throat, strep throat, virus, bacteria, etc.
- Infections of all kinds including strep, staph, impetigo, sinus, urinary tract, etc.
- Wounds and sores, especially those that won't heal such as diabetic sores.
- Immune tonic
- Lymph balance, swelling, inflammation.
- Kidney issues
- Chronic fatigue, herpes, and other chronic conditions.

Herb Preparations

- Extract (best form for internal use)
- Powder, capsules
- Herbal oil, salve, balm

Foraging/Harvesting

Grows on trees in moist, cool areas with clean, fresh air. Hangs like a green beard in the tops of trees and on branches.

- Collect from fallen branches first. Lichens grow very slowly so check the ground first, if you must take from a tree, only take exactly what you need.

Safety

Not for use during pregnancy. It should not be taken for longer than 3-4 weeks at a time without a rest for a couple of weeks, as it can build toxicity in the liver over time.