

Echinacea angustifolia (purpurea)
Family: *Compositae* – daisy, sunflower
Parts Used: entire plant but the root is the most potent

Also known as purple coneflower, echinacea has been used for centuries for stimulating the immune system to fight off illness or infection.

Properties

Alterative, antibacterial, antiseptic, antifungal, anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, anti-viral, anti-catarrhal, diaphoretic, immunostimulant, sialagogue
Energetics: cooling, drying, stimulating

Systems Affected: immune, skin, sinus

Uses

Echinacea has a special property of not only stimulating the immune system but fortifying and protecting cells against foreign invaders such as viruses and bacteria. Because of this action it can be used for any type of illness or infection in the body.

- Any type of inflammation
- Any type of infection including staph and strep
- Bronchial and respiratory infections
- Increase blood flow and stimulate lymph flow
- Sinus and nasal infections
- Sore throat and oral infections, tonsilitis, strep, etc.
- Ear infection
- Cold sores
- Bacterial and viral attacks, including meningitis
- Venomous stings and bits, including snake bites (take internally as well as topically to area affected)
- Blood cleansing; blood poisoning, gangrene, detox, etc.
- Yeast and bladder infections
- Skin imbalance, skin renewal properties
- Helps resolve abnormal cells and tumors
- Cold, flu and fever
- Boils, sores, and abscesses
- Cuts, wounds, and burns (increases cell activity that form new tissue)
- Mastitis and breast infection
- Vaccination reaction
- Fungal infections such as athletes' foot and ringworm
- Can increase white bloods cells in cancer patients receiving chemotherapy or radiation which helps with immune system support.

Herb Preparations

When treating external conditions take both internally and then apply externally as well.

- Tincture
- Tea
- Powder, capsules
- Compress poultice
- Mouthwash, gargle
- Suppository for vaginal infections and abnormal pap smear

Care/Harvesting

You can purchase echinacea in your local nursery in the spring. It is in the perennial section under the name purple coneflower, just make sure you check the Latin name to be Echinacea angustifolia. You can also start from seed. The most common Echinacea is E. purpurea, this species can also be used, it is just not as potent as the angustifolia species.

- Plant in full sun, after the last frost, should do well in any soil conditions.

<u>Harvesting the entire plant (at least 3 years old):</u>

- Leaves - In late spring
- When buds first begin to ripen, gather about 1/3 of the plant and dry.
- When the flowers bloom, gather several more blossoms, still leaving some remaining.
- Roots - In the fall when the plant dies back, its best to harvest a plant when 2-3 years old. Dig up plant, cut off top, scrub roots and chop to dry or use immediately.

Dosages and How to Use

For best results administer at the very first sign of illness and take it often for a short period of time, such as every hour (that you are awake) for a 24-hour period. Then evaluate and see if more is needed at which point you may lessen the duration of time to 3 times a day. I never go beyond a week just because the body has taken care of the problem by then. I almost always use echinacea in addition to other herbs specific to the ailment/condition I am treating.

Here are the dosage amounts I use, which can be adjusted per person and condition. Sometimes I feel I need to give it every half hour or maybe every two hours, you can read your body (or children's body) quite easily during an illness to see what will work best for you.

Tea - one cup of tea, 3-5 times a day (adult)
one cup of tea, 2-3 times a day (children)

Tincture/glycerite - 1-2 dropperfuls every hour (children)
2-3 dropperfuls every hour (adult)

Capsules - 2-3 capsules every hour