

Rubus idaeus
Family: *Rosaceae* – rose
Parts Used: leaves

Raspberry leaf is one of the most nutritive herbs out there for building all systems in the body, including the immune system. When someone is not feeling well, this is the first herb I turn to, to strengthen the body and get the systems back in working condition. It is a great addition to any herbal blend.

Properties

Alterative, anti-inflammatory, antiabortive, anti-emetic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent cathartic, diuretic, emmenagogue, hemostatic, nutritive, parturient, stimulant, stomachic, tonic, uterine tonic (fragarine).

Energetics: cooling, drying
Systems Affected: digestive, urinary, skin, mucus, uterus, circulatory.

Leaf Uses

- Drink the tea to replenish lost fluids and nutrients when sick with vomiting and diarrhea.
- Restores vitality after prolonged illness.
- Anemia and other blood conditions; works as a blood cleanser while being high in iron and other nutrients to build the blood.
- Sore throat, colds, fever, flu, etc.
- Mouth sores, cankers, spongy gums; use as a mouth wash then swallow.
- Tones and strengthens the stomach and bowels.
- Constipation, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, indigestion, heartburn, etc.
- Appendix complaints
- Nourishes and supports all glands
- Prostate and urinary tonic, may be helpful for bed wetting
- Hemorrhoids, ulcers, abscesses
- Infant issues; colic, jaundice, thrush
- Wounds, cuts, burns, rashes, and oozing skin conditions.
- Supports ligaments, cartilage, skin, hair, bones, and nails.
- Acne; take internally as well as using the tea as a facial toner.
- Infection in the body or on the skin
- Inflamed mucous membranes
- Use as an eyewash/rinse for sore, inflamed, infected eyes.
- Has been known to stabilize the pancreas making is useful for diabetics.

Berry Use

- High in antioxidants and minerals (promotes healthy body function)
- Strengthens and cleanses blood
- Indigestion, antacid action, mild laxative
- Cooling for overheating and fever

"*The berries are eaten in the summertime, as an afternoons dish, to please the taste of the sick as well as the sound.*" John Parkinson, 1629 English Herbalist

The Woman's Herb

Red Raspberry leaf tea can be consumed before, during and after pregnancy to strengthen and tone the uterus, balance hormones and bring relief to the pain of cramps and/or labor. Make a quart of tea at the beginning of the day and sip on it all day long.

- Uterine tonic – daily support for women's health
- PMS symptoms, cramps, excess bleeding, etc.
- Fibroids
- Endometriosis
- Miscarriage prevention
- Hot flashes
- Pregnancy, birth, and after birth support
- Before pregnancy: prepares the body by feeding the proper nutrients to the reproductive system and other body systems so they are ready and in prime condition when the time comes for conception.
- During pregnancy: tones the uterus, uterine hemorrhage, assists contractions and labor, relieves after birth pains, and enriches milk.*
- PMS: helps alleviate all symptoms of PMS, decrease menstrual flow, relieves painful cramps, hot flashes, balances hormones.
- Prolapsed or enlarged uterus, fibroids, endometriosis

"*When taken regularly in pregnancy, the infusion will quiet inappropriate premature pains and produce a safe, speedy, and easy delivery. Raspberry leaves, stimulate, tone, and regulate before and during childbearing, assisting contractions and checking hemorrhage during labor, relieving after-pains, then strengthening, cleansing, and enriching the milk of the mother in the post-delivery period.*" -Dr. John R. Christopher

Herb Preparations

- Tea - the best way to utilize the properties of this herb, make a quart of tea in the morning and sip on it throughout the day. Use 2 Tbsp dry leaf or 4 fresh per pint of hot water. Let steep for 15-20 minutes. Strain and sip throughout the day.
- Extract, syrup
- Poultice, compress (skin conditions and wounds)
- Washes; gargle, eye, external
- Douche - this puts the nutrients right in the place it is needed for uterus issues.

- When blended it puffs up and out rather than turning to a powder making it difficult to make capsules and sprinkles.

Care/Harvesting

Raspberries are a perennial plant that act like a biennial, the canes producing the berries for the year are cut off in the fall and new canes are produced for the next years berries.

- Plant in sandy soil, rich in organic matter in full sun.
- It is a good idea to plant in rows about 2-3 feet apart, the plants themselves space about every 18"- 2 feet.
- Water regularly, they like to be moist but well drained
- Keep mulched and all weeds and grass at bay. Lay a thick layer of compost down each fall, at least 3"
- Train the canes up a fence, trellis, or stakes with trimmer line or wire strung between them.
- The leaves can be harvested anytime. (I've read harvesting while flowering is most potent, but I've also read before flowering and after going to fruit is best, so take your pick :)) Don't take more than a third of the plant.
- Leaves can also be harvested from the new shoots the plant sends out that are pruned each spring and fall.
- Only use leaves that are fresh and green, do not use brown, spotted, bug eaten, or bruised leaves.

Safety

Many herbalists encourage use all throughout pregnancy but a few advocate for waiting until after the first trimester. Consult with your midwife or doctor if pregnant.