

Licorice

Latin Name: *Glycyrrhiza glabra*

Also known as: Licorice Root, Sweet Wood, Sweet Root

Scientific Classification

Family: Fabaceae – pea family
Genus: Glycyrrhiza – licorice
Species: *G. glabra* – cultivated licorice
Species: *G. glandulifera* – Russian licorice

Influence on the Body	(PRINCIPLE ACTIONS are listed in CAPITAL LETTERS)
<i>Addictions</i>	DRUG WITHDRAWAL • tobacco addiction
<i>Blood and Circulatory System</i>	BLOOD CLEANSER • arteriosclerosis • POOR CIRCULATION • CIRCULATORY SYSTEM • heart • dropsy (edema due to heart insufficiency) • hypertensive (increases blood pressure)
<i>Blood Sugar</i>	DIABETES • raises blood sugar • HYPERGLYCEMIA • HYPOGLYCEMIA
<i>Body System</i>	TONIC • VITALITY • ENDURANCE • ENERGY • mild stimulant (strengthens metabolism and circulation) • fatigue • adaptogen (increases resistance to stress) • chills • dizziness • longevity • age spots • senility • inflamed mucous membranes • DEMULCENT (softens and soothes inflammation of mucous membranes) • catarrh (inflamed and congested mucous membranes) • abscesses
<i>Digestive Tract</i>	food poisoning • ulcers • duodenal (small intestine) ulcers • bowel • heals and lubricates intestinal tract • constipation • aperient (mild laxative without purging) • hemorrhoids
<i>Ears</i>	EAR INFECTIONS
<i>Endocrine System</i>	ADRENAL GLAND EXHAUSTION • GLANDULAR TONIC (increases energy and strength to the adrenal glands) • ADDISON'S DISEASE (caused by adrenal gland insufficiency) • Cushing's disease (hyperfunction of adrenal gland cortex) • natural cortisone • pancreas

<i>Infections and Immune System</i>	COLDS • anti-viral • antipyretic (cools the body, reduces fevers) • herpes
<i>Inflammation</i>	anti-inflammatory • arthritis
<i>Liver</i>	liver • hepatitis • cirrhosis
<i>Lungs and Respiratory System</i>	COUGHS • expectorant (loosens and removes phlegm in the respiratory tract) • SOOTHES THROAT • asthma • bronchitis • mucous congestion • LUNG PROBLEMS • pneumonia • emphysema (enlarged air spaces in the lungs) • pectoral (healing to problems in the bronchio-pulmonary area)
<i>Mouth, Nose & Throat</i>	sialogogue (promotes an increase flow of saliva) • SORE THROAT • VOICE • laryngitis • HOARSENESS • EXPELS PHLEGM
<i>Reproductive System</i>	SEXUAL STIMULANT • APHRODISIAC (stimulates sexual desire) • impotency • gonorrhea <i>Female:</i> • FEMALE PROBLEMS • LOW ESTROGEN • menopause
<i>Skin, Tissues & Hair</i>	sores • emollient (softens and soothes skin when applied externally) • dermatitis
<i>Urinary Tract</i>	kidneys • bladder • diuretic (increases urine flow)
<i>Other Uses</i>	enhances properties of other herb combinations • sugar substitute • flavoring • covers taste of bitter herbs • coating for pills

Key Properties:

- SUSTAINS ADRENAL FUNCTION – stimulates and supports adrenal glands without depletion, raises blood sugar levels, boosts energy
- DEMULCENT – softens and soothes inflammation of mucous membranes, loosens and removes phlegm
- SWEETNESS
- natural cortisone – exhibits anti-inflammatory qualities
- hormonal properties

Primarily affecting: ADRENAL GLANDS • MUCOUS MEMBRANES
• LUNGS • STOMACH

History

Licorice use was first documented on Assyrian clay tablets (ca. 2500 BC) and Egyptian papyri. Ancient Arabs used licorice to treat coughs and relieve constipation. Indian Ayurvedic traditional medicine has a long history of using licorice as an expectorant, anti-inflammatory and laxative.

Dioscorides, a first-century Greek physician, coined a name that was later developed into the genus name 'glycyrrhiza', derived from the Greek words, 'glukos' for sweet, and 'riza' for root. The Roman name 'gliquiricia', became 'liquiritia', and evolved further into the more common name licorice.

Theophrastus, an ancient Greek physician and botanist (ca. 371-286 BC), documented the use of licorice to assist with coughs and asthma.

Alexander the Great (ca. 356-323 BC) supplied his troops with rations that included licorice root. They could chew on the root in battle to alleviate thirst, increase stamina, and cleanse the eyes.

Licorice was prescribed by early physicians from the time of Hippocrates (ca. 460-370 BC) in cases of dropsy and to prevent thirst.

Since 25 AD, the Chinese have used the herb extensively to relieve and prevent coughs and as an expectorant. It also relieves spasms of the smooth (involuntary) muscles and exhibits a cortisone-like action. Licorice is included in most Chinese formulas to 'harmonize' the herbs.

Culpepper, the English botanist, herbalist, and physician (ca. 1616-1654), wrote of licorice, it "helps the roughness of the windpipe, hoarseness, diseases in the kidneys and bladder, and ulcers in the bladder, it concocts raw humours in the stomach, helps difficulty of breathing, is profitable for all salt humours."

The German Commission E (first instituted in 1978) approved licorice root for inflammations of the upper respiratory tract and stomach ulcers.

My first memory of the wonderful healing abilities of licorice is when my father would eat it to relieve his stomach disorders. At the time, he didn't know it was healing his stomach, he just craved it. Later on, he noticed he didn't need his stomach medications any longer. This is just

another testament to follow your body!

Attributes

Key Components: (including, but not limited to)

Vitamins B1 (thiamine) • B2 (riboflavin) • B3 (niacin) • B5 (pantothenic acid) • B6 (pyridoxine) • B9 (folic acid) • B12 (cobalamin) • Biotin • Choline • Inositol • PABA (Para-Amino Benzoic Acid) • E

Calcium • Chromium • Magnesium • Manganese • Zinc

Glycyrrhizin (has a sweet taste and cortisone-like activity)

• Phytosterols (has some hormone activity)

Glycyrrhizin is an active ingredient of licorice that has anti-inflammatory, cough-suppressant, antiviral, estrogen-like, and aldosterone-like qualities.

Adrenals

Studies have shown that glycyrrhizin stimulates the excretion of cortisone and aldosterone without depleting the adrenal glands. Glycyrrhizin is similar in structure to cortisone (a hormone naturally released by the body as a reaction to stress and prepares the body for a fight or flight response). It helps the body handle stress, increases blood sugar levels, elevates blood pressure, and gives a general feeling of well-being. Licorice is one of the best known herbs used for hypoglycemia. Studies indicate that licorice may help reduce body fat.

Digestion

Licorice is a useful demulcent and anti-inflammatory for treating irritated mucous membranes of the stomach and duodenum. When ulcers occur in these structures, licorice stimulates repair and regeneration of damaged tissues. Controlled clinical studies show glycyrrhizic acid and its derivatives accelerate the healing of gastric ulcers.

In the 1950s, new research showed that licorice-derived compounds can raise the concentration of prostaglandins in the digestive system that promote mucous secretion from the stomach and produce new cells in the stomach lining.

A recent study from Iran used licorice-coated aspirin and found that the licorice helped protect against ulcers irritated by aspirin use and reduced the size and number of ulcers.

Licorice is a mild laxative that is safe and effective for delicate individuals with weak stomachs, and children who are constipated and unable to take stronger laxatives. It

softens, soothes, lubricates, and nourishes the intestinal tract.

Licorice is especially valuable for persons suffering with hemorrhoids, as softer stools diminish the discomfort accompanied by bowel movements. It is very effective for helping the body rid itself of hemorrhoids. Licorice is a corrective agent for stronger laxatives, modifying their action. It soothes and heals inflamed mucous membranes and catarrhal conditions of the bowel, kidneys and bladder.

Sweet Glycyrrhizic acid is 50 times sweeter than sugar cane and may safely be taken by diabetic patients. The dried roots may be chewed like candy. It has an agreeable taste, alleviates thirst and soothes the throat.

Licorice is one of the few substances that is both naturally sweet and relieves thirst. Most sweets do the opposite. It is probably not the sweetness that affects thirst, but the 'bitter' which remains once the licorice juice is thoroughly chewed. The slightly bitter element stimulates the salivary glands and relieves thirst.

Respiratory Tract Licorice relieves the discomfort of canker and mouth sores. The tea is used for laryngitis and will restore injured voice muscles, improving hoarseness and throat damage. Combined with other herbs, licorice is used for wheezing, shortness of breath, and pains of the chest and lungs.

Licorice is very soothing. It softens mucous membranes of the respiratory tract and cleanses them of catarrhal congestion. Licorice root reduces irritation of mucous surfaces, is useful in coughs and sore throats, and helps to loosen and bring up phlegm. It is often used in cough syrups and cough drops.

Immunity Licorice stimulates production of interferons (glycoproteins) in response to the presence of viral infection. Interferons assist the immune response by inhibiting viral replication within host cells, activating the body's natural killer cells and macrophages, increasing antigen presentation to lymphocytes, and inducing resistance of host cells to viral infection.

Licorice is a specific for flu, colds and lung congestion. For its anti-viral activity and soothing qualities, it is often added to cough syrups and lozenges for both children and adults.

<i>Liver</i>	Glycyrrhizine acid is used in the treatment of viral liver inflammation. By inducing interferon activity, it works as an anti-viral agent and helps protect the liver from diseases such as hepatitis and cirrhosis.
<i>Inflammation</i>	Licorice root exhibits substantial anti-inflammatory activity. The herb helps relieve arthritis by inducing the adrenal glands to release inflammation-soothing corticosteroids. Creams containing whole licorice (often combined with chamomile extract) are used for eczema, psoriasis and herpes. One study suggests that topical application of licorice extract may be effective in treating the itching and inflammation associated with dermatitis.
<i>Women</i>	Licorice contains phytosterols that facilitate estrogen production and help normalize ovulation in women experiencing infrequent menstruation. Studies indicate substances within licorice inhibit serotonin (a neuro-transmitter) elimination and may be useful in the treatment of mild to moderate depression in women.
<i>Circulation</i>	Licorice affects the concentration of blood salts and minerals and strengthens the heart and circulatory system. Studies indicate that dietary consumption of licorice root extract may help lower cholesterol and act as an antioxidant.
<i>Commercial Uses</i>	Licorice is added to candy, cakes, ice cream, and packaged desserts. Licorice candy sold in the United States is usually a synthetic-flavored licorice or combined with anise (a similar strong-flavored herb), but there are still a few brands that are based on true licorice. Much of the natural licorice imported to the United States today is used to flavor tobacco products. Licorice sticks consist of fresh or dried sections of licorice root that may be chewed. They are often used to help curb tobacco addiction by helping to discharge mucus from the upper respiratory tract and providing a tactile stimulus of having something to hold and chew. Because of its absorbent qualities, powdered licorice root is useful in pill-making. It stiffens the pill mass and helps to prevent adhesion of pills to each other.
Herb Parts Used	Peeled or unpeeled dried roots, rhizome (underground stem), and root runners
Preparations	Licorice root extract is used in cough drops and lozenges,

and Remedies

nicotine lozenges, syrups, and laxatives. It is added to foods and other herbal combinations to sweeten and flavor them. The root is added to teas and may be purchased dried, sliced, or powdered. In the powdered form it is put into capsules, tablets and tinctures for medicinal use.

DGL

Deglycyrrhizinated licorice (DGL) is a licorice preparation with the glycyrrhizin removed. However, it is not clear if DGL provides the same health benefits as whole licorice. I believe the Maker of licorice knew what He was doing!

Capsules

Allergies:

Take two capsules licorice root, three times a day plus powdered, above-ground coral and Redman clay to heal the stubborn hayfever problems. When the blood is clean and the adrenal glands strong, there is less possibility of having allergies or hayfever.

Powder

Mild Laxative:

Licorice powder taken internally will free and soften stools without griping, usually in 3-15 hours (3-6 hours if taken on an empty stomach). It is best given at bedtime. Take 1-2 teaspoonfuls of licorice powder daily for constipation, hemorrhoids, adrenal gland rejuvenation, blood sugar regulation, and as needed during pregnancy.

Extracts

Some people believe liquid extracts of licorice are incompatible with acid and should not be taken in citric juices.

Infusion

An infusion is made by boiling one ounce of the bruised root with a pint of water for a few minutes. The tea, may be used for sore throats and in catarrhal conditions of the urinary and intestinal tracts.

In preparing an infusion for the purpose of sweetening or hiding the taste of other preparations, it should not be boiled over five minutes. When licorice is boiled any longer, its acrid, bitter-tasting resin is released into the infusion, and it is less palatable (though it still retains its healing qualities).

Yarrow Tea: (see YARROW preparations)

Liver/ Jaundice Tonic: (see DANDELION preparations)

System Cleanse Tea: (see CHAPARRAL preparations)

Syrup

Laxative Syrup:

4 ounces Licorice root, cut or powdered
1 quart Distilled Water
8 ounces Honey

Stir the herb into water while cold. Cover and soak over night (or for at least 8 hours). Stir and bring to a slow boil. After boiling slowly for 20 minutes, strain and return liquid to a clean vessel. Bring to a boil again and stir in raw honey until dissolved. Remove from heat and allow it to cool, stirring occasionally.

Take 1 tablespoonful or more, 3-4 times daily (regulate dosage according to bowel movements). Reduce child dose to 1-3 teaspoonfuls, taken 2-3 times daily (according to need and size of child).

Syrup for Persistent and Irritated Cough:

2 ounce cut Licorice root, or 1 ounce powdered
4 ounces ground Flaxseed
1 quart Water
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon raw honey

Simmer licorice and flaxseed in water until it reaches syrup consistency. Strain and add lemon juice and honey. Give freely warm or cold. Children may take up to four ounces a day. Take the syrup freely, warm or cold (children – up to one teacupful), for persistent and irritated coughs from chest colds. It will cause sweating and loosen the cough.

Ointment

Skin Ointment:

Make an ointment for eczema, psoriasis, and redness of the skin by adding licorice extract to the goldenseal and myrrh salve (see GOLDENSEAL preparations) or add to pure aloe vera gel.

Safety

No health hazards or adverse side effects are known.

German health authorities recommend licorice not be used for more than four to six weeks at a time. German and French health agencies further suggest that licorice not be used without the advice of a health care provider in cases of high blood pressure, potassium deficiency, or chronic liver inflammation and liver cirrhosis. Side effects are very rare when using whole licorice preparations (as compared to the isolated glycyrrhizin licorice products).

Potassium rich foods (like bananas and dried apricots) may be eaten while taking licorice to counter possible potassium loss.

Plant Profile

Natural Habitat:

Indigenous to Spain, Southern Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Iraq, Russia, and Northern China, licorice is now widely cultivated throughout many parts of the world, including North America.

The plant grows best in sandy soil near streams, and is rarely found in the wild more than 150 feet from a body of water. The plant succeeds better in a warm climate. Licorice cannot endure severe freezing. Cool weather interferes with the formation of its juices and renders it woody.

Description

Licorice is a perennial herb (tops of plant usually die back to the ground in the winter and grow again the spring from a persistent rootstock) with woody stalks rising two to five feet in height, on which are set many long, narrow, green leaves on both sides with an odd leaf at the end. The plant can have many pale blue to light purple pea-like flowers, one above another on the stalk. These turn into long, smooth, somewhat flat, tubular fruit containing one to six kidney-shaped, hard seeds.

The plant has a cylindrical taproot that runs to a considerable depth. It is grayish-brown externally and yellow inside, and is succulent, tough, flexible, rapid in growth, and divides into three to five subsidiary roots and several horizontal woody stolons (underground stems). The roots and stolons are the most commonly used parts of the plant and may be harvested after three to four years of growth. The root has a peculiar earthy odor and a strong, characteristic, sweet taste.

Commercially, there are basically five grades, preferred in this order: Italian (best and sweetest), Spanish or Common liquorice root, Syrian, Turkish and Russian (the most bitter).

Growing Licorice

Planting:

Licorice prefers full sun and dry, alkaline, sandy soils. Plant in the fall or stratify seeds (chill in the refrigerator for 30 days) before sowing. Root cuttings may be planted in rows 4 feet apart (roots need space to spread). Thin or transplant seedlings 2-3 feet apart.

Harvesting

During the first two years, growth is slight. Plants do not rise above a foot the first season. The roots are not ready for harvest until the end of the third season, but are sweeter still in the fourth season. Harvesting generally occurs in the autumn of the fourth year, preferably before the plant bears fruit, as it exhausts the sweetness of the sap. The same ground yields a crop every three or four years. After the fourth year, the texture of the root begins to take on a tough, coarse and woody character.

Commercial harvesting is done by removing two to three feet of earth. This exposes the subterranean portion of the herb and allows the whole plant to be easily uprooted. Roots are severed, cleaned, washed, trimmed, sorted (older or 'hard' runners are sold, while the young 'soft' runners are reserved for replanting), cut, and marketed in bundles, bales and bags.

When washed, fresh licorice root is externally a bright yellowish brown. It is very flexible, easily cut with a knife, and has a light-yellow, juicy, internal substance. Both bark and wood are extremely tough, readily tearing into long, fibrous strings.
