

Arnica (*Arnica montana*)

Common Names: Leopard's Bane, Wolf's Bane, or Mountain Arnica

Location: This herb can be found in the mountains of Siberia, Europe, Canada and the Northern United States.

Description: This is a perennial with oval-shaped leaves and daisy-like flowers.

Properties: This herb is an anti-inflammatory, antibiotic and pain reliever.

Uses: Arnica can be used to help heal tissue, reduce bruising and swelling, aid in carpal tunnel syndrome, fractures and major injuries or traumas.

Doses: This herb can be found in creams.

Warnings: Pregnant women should not use arnica because it can be used to induce labor. This herb should never be taken internally because it is poisonous. Arnica should not be used for more than two weeks at a time.

Arnica Flower Profile

Also known as

Arnica montana L. or *A. chamissonis*, leopard's bane and mountain tobacco.

Introduction

Arnica is a graceful woodland plant in the same family as the sunflower, native to Central Europe and the western United States. Its yellow flowers are collected at summer's end and dried for medicinal use.

Constituents

According to The Complete German Commission E Monographs, arnica contains sesquiterpene lactones of the helenanolid type, predominantly ester derivatives of helenalin and 11,13-dihydrohelenalin. Additionally, the herb contains flavonoids (e.g., isoquercitrin, luteolin-7-glucoside, and astragalins), volatile oil (with thymol and its derivatives), phenol carbonic acid (chlorogenic acid, cynarin, caffeic acid), and coumarins (umbelliferone, scopoletin).

Parts Used

Fresh or dried flowers. The root is also used in European herbal preparations.

Typical Preparations

Used as an infusion (approximately 1 teaspoon dried herb in 1/2 cup water), tincture (approximately 1 part herb to 10 parts alcohol), oil (1 part dried herb in 5 parts plant oil), or mouth rinse (1 part tincture in 10 parts water), or ointment (1 part arnica oil to 4 or 5 parts base). Only homeopathic preparations of arnica are recommended for internal use.

Summary

Arnica oils and creams are used topically to treat sprains, bruises, and muscle pain. Diluted tinctures of arnica are used in foot baths (1 teaspoon of tincture to a pan of warm water) to soothe sore feet. Grieve's Herbal reported that nineteenth century American physicians recommended arnica tincture as a hair growth tonic. Homeopathic arnica is traditionally used to treat seasickness. Research published in June 2005 in the journal *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* found that homeopathic arnica can reduce post-partum bleeding.

Precautions

Not for internal use. Do not swallow any form of arnica except homeopathics. Repeated application to the skin can cause irritation. Do not apply to broken skin. Not recommended while pregnant or nursing.

Arnica

Botanical: *Arnica montana* (LINN.)

Family: N.O. Compositae

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---**Synonyms**---Mountain Tobacco. Leopard's Bane.

---**Parts Used**---Root, flowers.

---**Habitat**---*Arnica montana* or Leopard's Bane is a perennial herb, indigenous to Central Europe, in woods and mountain pastures. It has been found in England and Southern Scotland. but is probably an escape.

---**Description**---The leaves form a flat rosette, from the centre of which rises a flower stalk, 1 to 2 feet high, bearing orange-yellow flowers. The rhizome is dark brown, cylindrical, usually curved, and bears brittle wiry rootlets on the under surface.

---**Cultivation**---Arnica thrives in a mixture of loam, peat, and sand. It may be propagated by root division or from seed. Divide in spring. Sow in early spring in a cold frame, and plant out in May.

The flowers are collected entire and dried, but the receptacles are sometimes removed as they are liable to be attacked by insects.



Mountain Arnica
(*arnica montana*)

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The root is collected in autumn after the leaves have died down.

---Constituents---A bitter yellow crystalline principle, Arnicin, and a volatile oil. Tannin and phulin are also present. The flowers are said to contain more Arnicin than the rhizome, but no tannin.

---Medicinal Action and Uses---In countries where Arnica is indigenous, it has long been a popular remedy. In the North American colonies the flowers are used in preference to the rhizome. They have a discutient property. The tincture is used for external application to sprains, bruises, and wounds, and as a paint for chilblains when the skin is unbroken. Repeated applications may produce severe inflammation. It is seldom used internally, because of its irritant effect on the stomach. Its action is stimulant and diuretic, and it is chiefly used in low fevers and paralytic affections.

Arnica flowers are sometimes adulterated with other composite flowers, especially *Calendula officinalis*, *Inula britannica*, *Kragapogon pratensis*, and *Scorzonera humilis*.

A homoeopathic tincture, X6, has been used successfully in the treatment of epilepsy; also for seasickness, 3 X before sailing, and every hour on board till comfortable.

For tender feet a foot-bath of hot water containing 1/2 oz. of the tincture has brought great relief. Applied to the scalp it will make the hair grow.

Great care must be exercised though, as some people are particularly sensitive to the plant and many severe cases of poisoning have resulted from its use, especially if taken internally.

British Pharmacopoeia Tincture, root, 10 to 30 drops. United States Pharmacopoeia Tincture, flowers, 10 to 30 drops.