

## Butternut Bark and Powder Profile

### Also known as

Juglans cinerea, Butternussbaum, Lemon Walnut, Oil Nut, White Walnut, Nogal Ceniciento, Noyer Cerdr, and Grqy Walnut.

### Introduction

The butternut is a walnut with leaves like the black walnut but a grayish, deeply furrowed bark. It is native to the Midwest and Northeastern regions of the United States. While walnuts are round, butternuts are elongated, like pecans. They have been used by the Native Americans for centuries, who boiled them to extract the oil, which was used like a butter. The Iroquois were observed using the butter as a form of toothache relief. The early settlers pickled the kernels. By the 1800s it was widely used as a laxative and to support healthy liver functions, as well as for intestinal complaints. Notably, it was used as a vermifuge to expel, rather than kill, internal parasites and worms through the course of a laxative induced cleansing of the system.

### Constituents

Juglandic acid, juglone, tannins.

### Parts Used

Inner bark, dried and chopped.

### Typical Preparations

Tea or extract. Butternut bark pieces (but not butternut bark powder) can be soaked in any alcohol as a beverage (such as vodka) with small pieces of ginger and/or angelica to make an extract for treating chronic constipation. Butternut bark powder (see Butternut Bark Powder Herb Profile) is used to make a syrup for treating tapeworms. Can also be taken as an extract or in a capsule.

### Summary

Butternut bark is a mild laxative, used for the same indications as rhubarb, but unlike rhubarb in that small doses are not constipating. Butternut acts on the lower bowel 4 to 8 hours after the herb is taken, and does not cause cramping. The herb also encourages the release of bile by the liver, assisting the digestion of fats and helping maintain hormonal balance. Some historical evidence shows that it has been used for hemorrhoids as well.

### Precautions

Do not use if you have gallstones.

**Botanical:** *Juglans cinerea* (LINN.)

**Family:** N.O. Juglandaceae

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---Synonyms---White Walnut. Oilnut.

---Part Used---Bark of the root.

---Habitat---New Brunswick and mountains of Georgia.

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---Description---The leaves possess much the same properties as the Black Walnut. The inner bark of the root is the best for medicinal use and should be collected in May or June; it is generally found in quills, curved strips or chips from 1/8 to 1/2 inch thick, deep brown in

colour all through, outer surface smooth and a little warty, inner surface smooth and striate with fragments and thin stringy fibre, short fracture, weak and fibrous, odour slightly aromatic, taste bitter (astringent and acrid). The powdered drug is dark brown.

**---Constituents---**A bitter extractive, a large proportion of oily matter, a volatilizable acid and juglandic acid.

**---Medicinal Action and Uses---**Butternut is a mild cathartic like rhubarb; it does not constipate and is often used as a habitual laxative, also for dysentery and hepatic congestions. It has been employed as a vermifuge and is recommended for syphilis and old ulcers. The expressed oil of the fruit removes tapeworm. The fruit when halfgrown is made into pickles and when matured is a valuable article of diet. The bark is used for dyeing wool a dark brown colour but is inferior to that of the black walnut for this purpose. It is said to be rubefacient when applied to the skin.

**---Preparations---**Fluid extract, 1 to 2 drachms. Solid extract, 5 to 10 grains Juglandin, 2 to 5 grains.