

Chaparral (*Larrea divaricata*)

Common Names: Larrea, herdiondilla, gobernadora, and creosote bush.

Location: This herb originates in the southern United States and northern Mexico.

Description: Chaparral leaves are used medicinally.

Properties: This herb is an antioxidant and anti-inflammation.

Uses: Use chaparral to fight arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, cancer and HIV/AIDS.

Doses: You can use this herb as a bath mix.

Warnings: This herb, if taken internally, can cause reduced testicle size, increased aggressiveness and irritability, and serious, toxic side effects in the body. If you have sensitive skin, kidney problems, liver problems or lymphatic system problems do not take this herb. If you do chose to take chaparral, be aware that you should stay out of the sun.

## Also known as

Larrea tridentata, Creosote Bush, Stinkweed, Greasewood, Chaparro Gobernadora, and Hediiondilla.

## Introduction

Now found throughout the Southwestern US, chaparral actually originated in Argentina several thousand years ago. The stems and leaves of the bush are covered with a sticky resin that screens leaves against ultraviolet radiation, reduces water loss, and poisons or repels most herbivores. This resin is used in herbal medicine and to protect wood from insects. It received its name "creosote bush" due to the smell that comes from it when it rains. It's extremely bitter taste keeps it safe from animals that would otherwise graze upon it. It is also regarded as one of the most adaptable desert plants in the world; it was one of the first to grow back in Yucca Flats after the 1962 nuclear bomb tests done there.

## Constituents

Alpha-pinene, amino acids, beta-pinene, cobalt, gossypetin, limonene, nordihydroguaiaretic acid or NDGA, zinc.

## Parts Used

Above-ground parts of the plant.

## Typical Preparations

Tinctures used to make creams and lotions for external use. Sometimes used internally as a tea in alternative cancer treatments. Seldom found encapsulated or as an extract.

## Summary

Chaparral contains lignans that are very similar to estrogen, giving it an effect on the skin similar to that

of soy taken internally. Applied to the skin, chaparral can have a remarkable healing effect on eczema, herpes, cold sores, psoriasis, and contact dermatitis.

## **Precautions**

Long term use of Chaparral is not recommended and excessive use may result in stomach upset. Special Warning: SEEK ADVICE FROM A HEALTH PRACTITIONER BEFORE USE IF YOU HAVE/MAY HAVE HAD KIDNEY OR LIVER DISEASE. DISCONTINUE USE IF NAUSEA, FEVER, FATIGUE OR JAUNDICE (DARK URINE, YELLOW DISCOLORATION OF EYES) SHOULD OCCUR: