

Cordyceps (*Cordyceps sinensis*)

Common Name: Dong chong xia cao.

Location: This herb can be located in Japan, China and on the Atlantic coast of North America.

Description: According to the author of *Prescriptions for Herbal Healing* (2002), “It is an antlered fungus that grows in insect larvae, usually before the insect’s cocoon is formed. The short, stick like fungus has a fat, full, round, yellow-white cross section. It is gathered in early summer.”

Properties: Cordyceps has been used over the centuries to treat sexual diseases like impotence. This herb improves the immune system function and helps to provide people with an overall energy boost.

Uses: Use this herb to help treat cancer, high cholesterol, and tinnitus.

Doses: This herb is available in tincture and tablet form.

Warnings: Avoid the use of this herb if you have prostate cancer or breast cancer or if you are below adult age. Talk with your doctor if you are currently taking anticoagulant drugs.

## Also known as

*Cordyceps sinensis*, caterpillar fungus, dong chong xia cao.

## Introduction

Use of *Cordyceps sinensis* dates back to the 15th century in traditional Tibetan and Chinese medicines. In these traditional medicines, Cordyceps has long been prized for its action in restoring energy, promoting longevity, and general improvement of quality of life. The wild form of Cordyceps is rare and expensive; consequently, a strain isolated from the wild form is now cultivated and commonly used. The type offered by Mountain Rose Herbs is organically grown in the United States.

## Constituents

Adenine, adenosine, uracil, uridine, guanidine, guanosine, hypoxanthine, inosine, thymine, thymidine, and deoxyuridine.

## Parts Used

Whole mushroom.

## Typical Preparations

Traditionally prepared in Chinese medicine as a broth, it can also be used as an extract, as a tea, or in capsules.

## Summary

While Cordyceps has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for centuries, modern research affirms its value. Extracts of *Cordyceps sinensis* showed substantial anticancer activities by several mechanisms. In addition, experiments have shown that cordyceps can protect bone marrow and the liver, and may

have antidepressant and hypoglycemic effects

## **Precautions**

Excessive use may cause mild diarrhea, dry mouth, and nausea.