

Devil's Claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*)

Location: This herb can be found in South Africa.

Description: The root of this herb is used medicinally.

Properties: This herb is known for being a painkiller and anti-inflammatory.

Uses: Use devil's claw to treat carpal tunnel syndrome, gout, arthritis and tendonitis.

Doses: This herb can be taken in an enteric-coated capsule to treat pain.

Warnings: Do not take this herb if you have congestive heart disease, ulcers, or if you are pregnant.

10-8-2011- Customer with Fibromialgia has been using 1 capsule a day for a month. Noticed less pain, less frequent and less intense flashes. Also her period went from 7 days heavy bleed to 3 days, though menstrual pain did not lessen..

## Devil's Claw Root and Powder Profile

### Also known as

*Harpagophytum procumbens*, Unicorn plant, Grapple plant, Wood Spider, and Elephant Tusks.

### Introduction

Devil's claw is native to South Africa, named because of its peculiar appearance. The common name refers to the inner capsule of the fruit which splits open at one end and becomes two curved horns or claws. Its claw-like roots are used in medicines after they are chopped and allowed to dry in the sun for at least 3 days. The tribal herbal traditions of South Africa employed devil's claw to relieve pain, specifically for joint and muscular problems, as well as to stimulate digestion, to reduce persistent fevers, heartburn, persistent headache, and various allergies. Devil's claw is one of the bitterest of all herbs, making a very good digestive stimulant. English and Dutch explorers traded devil claw and sold it in Europe as a popular remedy for arthritis.

### Constituents

Aluminum, calcium, chlorogenic acid, chromium, harpagide, kaempferol, luteolin, magnesium, oleanolic acid, selenium, tin, zinc.

### Parts Used

Sun dried tuber. Most prefer secondary tuber, and this is the form offered by Mountain Rose Herbs.

### Typical Preparations

Capsules, tinctures, teas.

## **Summary**

Devil's claw has been traditionally used to offer slow but sure relief of joint pain caused by both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, and it has also been shown to relieve muscle pain and enhance mobility for people with either arthritis or muscle injuries. Scientists don't know exactly how devil's claw works at this time, other than that it is not a COX-2 inhibitor like Celebrex or Vioxx, and therefore is not potentially injurious to the heart. Tests done in both Germany and France have shown the herb to have anti-inflammatory properties, but its effectiveness in herbal practice is disputed despite a lengthy history of use. It does have a German E commission monograph.

## **Precautions**

Safety during pregnancy has not been established. Not recommended for those who suffer from stomach inflammation, ulcers, or digestive disorders.