

Iceland Moss Profile

Also known as

Cetraria islandica, fucus, consumption moss, Iceland lichen and muscus.

Introduction

Iceland moss is a lichen harvested, as its name suggests, in Iceland and across Scandinavia. Throughout history, Iceland moss has been used as both food and medicine by people in Iceland, Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden. Not just a famine food, it has been made into flour for bread, mixed with almonds, chocolate, or lemon to make puddings, and even used to make molasses. It has been found to be an effective treatment for coughs, colds, and bronchitis as it can create a moist and soothing layer in the throat that can help ease these problems. It is considered a bitter and therefore may help in stimulating the appetite.

Constituents

Complex polysaccharides with immunostimulant action.

Parts Used

Dried whole lichen

Typical Preparations

Cough drops, gargles, infusions, and tinctures.

Summary

In the challenging environment of Iceland, the tiny Iceland moss guards its food supply by secreting antimicrobial chemicals. These chemicals also counteract bacterial and viral infections in the ears, nose, mouth, and throat. Iceland moss is also useful for preventing irritation caused by breathing through the mouth, as experienced by users of PAP machines for apnea or people recovering from nasal surgery. Research is underway for use of chemicals in Iceland moss as treatments for peptic ulcer disease, cancer, and HIV.

Precautions

None known, however large doses may cause gastrointestinal irritation