

## Slippery Elm (*Ulmus rubra*)

Common Names: Indian elm, moose elm, red elm, sweet elm.

Location: Slippery elm is a large, deciduous tree that is native to North America and thrives in well-drained soil on high ground, frequently reaching a height of 60 feet. The inner bark of the trunk and branches is collected in the spring for medicinal use.

Description: Early English settlers in North America noticed its widespread use by Native Americans, who soaked the inner bark in water and applied it to wounds. The slippery elm bark would then dry into a natural bandage. Native Americans also wrapped slippery elm around pieces of meat to prevent spoilage. It was mixed with water to make a soothing gruel for children and for sick people of any age.

Properties: The bark holds the healing properties.

Uses: Slippery elm has a soothing and healing effect on any part of the body it comes into contact with. It is used in the treatment of sore throats, indigestion, digestive irritation, and stomach ulcers. It is able to neutralize excess acids in the stomach and intestines. It can also be used externally to heal wounds and burns, and can relieve irritated, inflamed, or itchy skin. The mucilage in slippery elm bark is an excellent remedy for irritation and inflammation of the reproductive and respiratory systems, as well as the urinary tract. Benefits of slippery elm for specific health conditions include treatment of the following: Crohn's disease, food poisoning and irritable bowel syndrome.

Doses: Slippery elm can be used as a tea, a powder mixed into cold water, or a poultice. Since slippery elm is also a food product, there is no upper limit on dosage, but taking 2 teaspoons dissolved in 1 cup of water is the minimum amount that works, and 5 teaspoons is the maximum that will dissolve in 1 cup of water.

Warnings: Slippery elm is regarded as safe. However, because of the high mucilage content it may interfere with the absorption of medications taken at the same time.