

Walnut Leaf (*Juglans nigra*, *Juglans regia*)

Common Names: Black walnut, white walnut.

Location: Walnut trees are native to the dry temperate zones of western Asia, China, India, and the southwestern United States.

Description: The tree most often used in herbal medicine, the species native to western Asia, also is cultivated for commercial walnut production in Europe and the United States. Walnut leaves have been used in herbal medicine for thousands of years. The Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder reported the cultivation of walnut trees in the first century, the trees having reached Rome from the Middle East. The Latin name of the tree is derived from reference to the god Jupiter; *Juglanis* is derived from combining the name Jupiter with *glans* (acorn), meaning “Jupiter’s nuts.” The famed seventeenth-century English herbalist Nicholas Culpepper combined walnut leaf with honey, onion, and salt to draw out venom from the bites of snakes and spiders.

Properties: The leaves are gathered in the spring and summer and dried for medicinal purposes.

Uses: During the last century, walnut leaf has been known as one of the “most mild and effacious laxatives” available. White walnut also is used in homeopathy as a treatment for liver disorders and intestinal sickness. Another species of walnut, the black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), is used to treat athlete’s foot and parasitic infections. Black walnut bark helps relieve constipation and is useful against fungal and parasitic infections. It is used to expel, rather than kill, worms during the normal course of laxative-induced cleansing of the body. It may also help to eliminate warts, which are growths caused by viruses. Used externally, black walnut is beneficial for eczema, herpes, psoriasis, and skin parasites. Black walnut is also used to balance blood-sugar levels and to burn up toxins and fatty materials. It has been shown to exhibit anticancer properties due to the acids and alkaloids it contains. Benefits of walnut leaf for specific health conditions include treatment of the following: acne, eczema, ringworm, excessive sweating and by shrinking the sweat glands, reducing perspiration. The herb’s tannins cause proteins in the cells lining the sweat glands to cross-link, effectively forming a barrier to the excretion of sweat.

Doses: Walnut leaf teas can be made into baths, compresses, and skin washes. This herb product is more likely to be obtained from herb shops and other herb suppliers. There are many products that are made with walnut hulls combined with other herbs in tinctures for use as a harsh laxative.

Warnings: You should not use walnut hulls instead of walnut leaf for the conditions discussed above.