

# Vermeulen / Johnston PLANTS - Homeopathic and Medicinal Uses from a Botanical Family Perspective

## Leseprobe

[PLANTS - Homeopathic and Medicinal Uses from a Botanical Family Perspective](#)  
von [Vermeulen / Johnston](#)

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FAMILY **ARALIACEAE** – ORDER **APIALES**

**Botanical Keys**

- Ivy and Ginseng family with 43 genera holding about 1450 species of rather stout-stemmed and little-branched shrubs or trees, often strong-smelling and with large and prominent scars from the fallen leaves.
- Distribution: Worldwide, but centred in tropics.
- Sister family to Apiaceae and by some authorities included in a broadly circumscribed Apiaceae.
- Leaves often compound, with broad, more or less sheathing leaf-bases.
- Flowers small, in compound inflorescences, usually either capitate [head-like] or umbellate.
- Fruit a globose drupe with several seeds.
- Classified in order Apiales by both Cronquist and Dahlgren.
- *Compare* other families in order Apiales: Apiaceae [Umbelliferae]; Pittosporaceae.

**ARALIACEAE IN HOMEOPATHY**

Homeopathic name	Common name	Abbreviation	Symptoms
<i>Aralia californica</i>	Elk-clover	Aral-c.	None
<i>Aralia hispida</i>	Bristly sarsaparilla	Aral-h.	5–10
<i>Aralia nudicaulis</i>	Wild sarsaparilla	Aral-nu.	None
<i>Aralia racemosa</i>	American spikenard	Aral.	c. 240
<i>Aralia spinosa</i>	Devil's-walking-stick	Aral-sp.	None
<i>Eleutherococcus senticosus</i>	Siberian ginseng	Eleut.	None
Ginseng <sup>1</sup>	Ginseng	Gins.	c. 540 <sup>2</sup>
<i>Hedera helix</i>	English ivy	Hed.	c. 220
<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	Marsh pennywort	Hydrc-vg.	None
<i>Oplopanax horridus</i>	Devil's club	Oplo-h.	None <sup>3</sup>
<i>Panax quinquefolius</i>	American ginseng	Panax-q.	None <sup>4</sup>

1 = Identity uncertain: unclear whether it concerns *Panax ginseng* [Chinese ginseng] or *Panax quinquefolius* [American ginseng], or both. 2–4 = Symptoms provings not yet included.

## Sarsaparilla

As with many plants and common names, there is some confusion as to what is really what. In this case sarsaparilla is causing the confusion. It often recalls the imagery of the Wild West of the rugged ranch hand belling up to the saloon bar and hailing the bartender for a foaming sarsaparilla. What actually is that sarsaparilla? Is it from *Aralia* species or from *Smilax* species? In fact, it is from neither. The United States Department of Agriculture, Food And Drug Administration, New and Revised Definitions and Standards for Food Products [1931] mandates that sarsaparilla flavour be made from oil of sassafras [see Laurales – Sassafras] and methyl salicylate or oil of wintergreen or oil of sweet birch. This seems to indicate that the botanical name sarsaparilla and the flavouring named sarsaparilla are two entirely different things. Just to confound things even further, the flavour that was called sarsaparilla is not generally available any longer under that name. It is simply not heard of anymore. There are exceptions, however. Australians can still drink sarsaparilla-flavoured soft drinks and in Taiwan it is not all too difficult to find HeySong Sarsaparilla soda. Though the name is a dead end, the same old-time sarsaparilla flavour is still very much alive, having reinvented itself as Root Beer.

### Main Constituents

- Triterpene saponins – lipophilic steroid-like compounds, such as aralosides in *Aralia*, ginsenosides or panaxosides in *Panax*, eleutherosides in *Eleutherococcus* and hederacosides in *Hedera*.

### Pharmacological Activities

Historically, the triterpene saponins in this family have been claimed to exert a strengthening effect and to raise physical and mental capacity for work. These properties are defined with the term adaptogenic, involving a non-specific increase in resistance to the noxious effects of physical, chemical, biological or emotional stress. A less scientific sounding term could be ‘stress busters’.

Herbs of this family are thought to help support adrenal gland function when the body is challenged by stress, helping it adapt to any situation that would alter its normal function. They are thought to help reduce the exhaustion phase of the stress response and return the adrenals to normal function faster. Triterpenes are also known to bind to steroid hormone receptors.

### Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis

Pharmacologically, the centre of activity of Araliaceae appears to be the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, called the HPA. The HPA is a complex set of direct influences and feedback interactions among the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland and the adrenal glands. As a major part of the neuro-endocrine system, the HPA axis regulates many body processes, including digestion, the immune system, mood and emotions, sexuality and energy storage and expenditure. Furthermore, it is the common mechanism for interactions among glands, hormones and parts of the midbrain that mediate the general adaptation syndrome. It is through the regulation of all these body systems that the HPA

controls reactions to stress. The HPA axis response to stress is generally higher in women than in men.

The key hormones of the HPA axis include vasopressin, known as antidiuretic or water conservation hormone, and corticotropin-releasing hormone, CRH. Vasopressin and CRH stimulate the secretion of adrenocorticotrophic hormone, ACTH, which in turn acts on the adrenal cortices, which produce glucocorticoid hormones, mainly cortisol in humans, in response to stimulation by ACTH.

Cortisol is a major stress hormone and has effects on many tissues in the body, including the brain. In healthy individuals, cortisol rises rapidly before or right after waking, reaching a peak within 30–45 minutes. About 80% of the day's cortisol is secreted in this early morning time, getting a person pepped up for the day. It then gradually falls over the day, rising again in late afternoon about 4 p.m. Cortisol levels continue falling through the evening, reaching a trough during the middle of the night, only to sharply rise again when a new day starts.

If adrenaline is the short-term, immediate danger, flight or fight hormone, then cortisol is the hormone of long-term continuous danger or stress. It picks up after adrenaline wears off.

Cortisol deficiency or an abnormally flattened circadian cortisol cycle has been linked with chronic fatigue syndrome, insomnia and burnout. Increased production of cortisol results from long-term alarm reactions to stress where adapting to the chronic on-going presence of stress is necessary for survival. The person is adapting to stress and the price for that adaptation is very high indeed. Many immune related conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, arteriosclerosis and even cancer can be the result of living with elevated cortisol levels chronically.

A spectrum of conditions may be associated with increased and prolonged activation of the HPA axis, including melancholic depression, anorexia nervosa with or without malnutrition, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic anxiety, chronic active alcoholism, alcohol and narcotic withdrawal, excessive exercising, poorly controlled diabetes mellitus, childhood sexual abuse and hyperthyroidism.

Hypoactivation or depletion of the stress system, on the other hand, has been linked with post-traumatic stress disorder, atypical seasonal depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, hypothyroidism, post stress conditions, post-partum, menopause and nicotine withdrawal.

### **Neurasthenia**

Stress related syndromes are not at all new. In 1869 George Miller Beard first used the term neurasthenia to denote a condition with symptoms of fatigue, anxiety, headache, impotence, neuralgia and depressed mood. Americans were supposed to be particularly prone to neurasthenia, which resulted in the nickname the Great American Disease or 'Americanitis', popularised by William James. Just as today with chronic fatigue syndrome, in the late 1800s neurasthenia became a popular diagnosis, expanding to include such symptoms as weakness, dizziness and fainting. A common treatment was the rest cure, especially for women, who were the gender primarily diagnosed with the condition at that time. It was explained as being a result of exhaustion of the central nervous system's energy reserves, which Beard attributed to civilisation. He might be credited with first

developing the idea that 'living was dangerous to your health.' Physicians in the Beard school of thought associated neurasthenia with the stresses of urbanisation and the pressures placed on the intellectual class by the increasingly competitive business environment. Typically, it was associated with upper class individuals in sedentary employment.

The modern view holds that the main problem with the neurasthenia diagnosis was that it attempted to group together a wide variety of cases. In recent years, Richard M. Fogoros has posited that perhaps 'neurasthenia' was a word that included some psychiatric and psychological conditions, but more importantly many physiological conditions that are marginally understood by the medical community, such as fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome and irritable bowel syndrome. [Extracted from Wikipedia]

Today this syndrome, by whatever name it goes, is accepted as a psycho-pathological phenomenon. When first used by Beard in 1869, the pioneer who elucidated the physiological component to physical medical problems, Sigmund Freud, was only 13 years old. Understanding the interactions of mind and body were decades in the future.

The homeopathic materia medica is chock-full with the term neurasthenia. It wouldn't make much sense to connect it with any plant family or remedy group in particular. On the other hand, so little is known about the Araliaceae as a group that some broad generalisations will help get a preliminary idea. First of all, Ginseng features in the rubric, 'Neurasthenia after debilitating diseases', while *Hedera helix* has a key symptom of the condition, 'Constantly lives in a state of anxiety and worry.' Secondly, on the authority of Louis Berman [1928], we note the 'relations of neurasthenia to the glands of internal secretion in general and to adrenal insufficiency in particular.' Thirdly, the symptoms elicited in the proving of American ginseng [*Panax quinquefolius*] were characterised by 'a condition of anxiety which is constantly present in all sexual hypochondriacs . . . [making *Panax*] a curative remedy in such cases of sexual weakness that especially react upon the mind, causing lassitude, and uneasy mental condition even to fears of approaching impotence.' [see below]

### Breaking Down from Too Great Demands

Berman clarifies by saying: 'The neurasthenic is to be recognised by the fact that the most painstaking objective examination of his organs reveals nothing the matter with them. Yet, according to his complaint, everything is the matter with him. He cannot sleep when he lies down, he cannot keep awake when he stands up. He cannot concentrate, but still he is pitifully worried about his life. The slightest irritant causes him to go off the handle.

'As he works himself up into his hysterical state as a reaction to a disagreeable person or problem, irregular blotches may appear on his face and neck. Generally, his hands and feet are clammy and perspiring, his face is abnormally flushed or pallid, the eyes are worried or starey, unwonted wandering sensations involving now this area of the body or now that obsess him. As the blood pressure is too low for the age, the circulation is nearly always inadequate and palpitation of the heart is a frequent complaint. So frequent that attention is often centred

upon the heart, a diagnosis of heart disease is made and the unfortunate is doomed for life – to brood over horrible possibilities. The brooding over themselves and their troubles is one of the distinctive features of the whole complex. Neurasthenia may masquerade as any organic disease. An individual with a soil for a neurasthenic reaction to life will become neurasthenic when confronted by any stone wall, including a serious ailment within himself.'

Compare Berman's description with a symptom in *Aralia racemosa*. 'I have been annoyed all day by a dread that my right lung is seriously diseased. Could not shake off the fear.'

Berman goes on to say: 'Neurasthenia, regarded as a reaction of people to the stress and strain of life, has without a doubt increased. The most casual of observers will tell you that the generation of the Great War is a neurasthenic generation. It takes its pleasures too intensely, its pains too seriously, its troubles too flippantly. . . . Now one of the outstanding effects of disease of the adrenal glands is the feeling of muscular and mental inefficiency. And as a matter of fact, a good number of observations conspire for the idea that a certain number of neurasthenics are suffering from insufficiency of the adrenal gland. The chronic state of the acute phenomenon, known as the nervous breakdown, really represents in them a breakdown of the reserves of the adrenals and an elimination of their factor of safety. In the light of that conception, the great American disease – dementia americana – is seen to be adrenal disease – and the American life to be the adrenal life, often making too great demands upon that life and so breaking down with it.'

Reading Berman's depiction, it is easy to find oneself thinking how accurately he was describing modern life and the sufferers of chronic fatigue syndrome that has been so prevalent in the last 20 years. Recalling that Beard blamed neurasthenia on 'urbanisation and the pressures placed on the intellectual class by the increasingly competitive business environment' it would appear that Berman must be referring to our modern world with its work pressures, fast-paced demanding life style, whiz-bang advancing technology, globalisation and terrorism threats. Settled with that image, it is something of a surprise to come upon his reference to the 'Great War', meaning 1914–1918. He was not speaking about the current era, but about one that is looked back upon with nostalgia for its sublime simplicity, slow-paced graciousness and bucolic peacefulness. How could they think they were stressed?

### The Tired Competition

Beard and Berman have given us sterling descriptions of neurasthenia as fatigue or a breakdown resulting from the stress and strain of life. More recently Betsy Berne gave her unsurpassed observations of fatigue of our time, what could be called the 'new neurasthenia'. Her article, *The Tired Chronicles*, contains scathingly accurate commentary. 'I've noticed recently that the main topic of conversation among my friends is tiredness. Actually, there is an underlying contest over who is the more tired and who has truly earned his or her tiredness. . . . According to the tired married people with kids, there is no contest. They are the royalty of the tired kingdom. They are smug with exhaustion. I

belong to the tired-single-people-who-work-at-home group and in the tired race I don't have a prayer. . . . By now it might be time to mention my brother, the jazz musician. He is bone tired. This is because he is a member of yet another group, the international-jet-set tired people. My brother is always on the road playing gigs – from Istanbul to Helsinki to Houston Street. When he is on tour in Italy, for example, not only must he deal with adulation of fans, but he must consume sumptuous free meals and stay in Tuscan castles. And he must always hang out after a gig. “Hang” is jazz lingo for drinking all night with fans, who are often female. You can imagine the tiredness this leads to. . . . Just last year, my big wheel writer friend joined the ranks of the international-jet-set tired group. Now she, too, is always flying to exotic locales. . . . She, too, is forced to consume sumptuous free meals and stay in Tuscan castles. And, if that weren't tiring enough she is also searching for a mate . . . naturally leading to you know what.' [The New Yorker; Aug 7, 1995]

### Courage

Dr. James Lembke of Riga in former Russia, now Latvia, proved a large number of remedies upon himself between 1845 and 1868. The Ginseng proving elicited a unique feeling in him – courage. It is one of the first sensations he notices some two hours after the first dose. The word courage goes right back to the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, more particularly to Louis Berman and his view on the adrenals.

Berman writes: ‘Courage is commonly thought of as the emotion that is the opposite of fear. It would follow that courage meant simply inhibition of the adrenal medulla. As a matter of fact, of course, the mechanism of courage must be more complex. One must distinguish animal courage and deliberate courage. Animal courage is literally the courage of the beast. Animals with large adrenals are the pugnacious, aggressive, charging kings of the fields and forests. . . . In courage, deliberate courage, there is more than instinct. There is an act of volition, a display of will. Admitting that without the adrenals such courage would be impossible, the chief credit for courage must be ascribed to the prepituitary. . . . The prepituitary has been called the gland of intellectuality [to use that term for lack of better]. By intellectuality is meant the capacity of the mind to control its environment by concept and abstract ideas. . . . Now the emotion that is the precursor of intellectuality is curiosity, with wonder and its expression in the various constructive and acquisitive tendencies. . . . The ability to profit by experience and to make more and more accurate judgements as one grows older implies at least a maximum efficiency of the prepituitary.’

The rubric ‘Courageous’ played a key role for Maud Nerman in finding Ginseng as the similitum in two cases. About the first case, a woman with lumbar herniation and sciatica after a fall on the sacrum, she says: ‘What do we mean by courage? And what is the kind of courage particular to this remedy [Ginseng], rather than other remedies, in this rubric? To be courageous, one has to have a firm conviction that the way one sees the world is good and valid. Otherwise, that person cannot move forward with confidence and fortitude. In my unpublished novel, “A Deep Sworn Vow,” I address the issue of courage: In a limited

sense, courage is about enduring the unendurable. On another level, courage is the ability to maintain important human values, kindness, tenderness, respect in the face of the intolerable. The ultimate act of courage is not moving forward without fear. Ultimately courage is the act of moving forward wisely, despite pain, fear or desire.

'Clearly, despite tremendous pain, this patient persevered. She worked to help others, she travelled and she even went into the pain with meditation. All of this, for someone suffering from tremendous pain, is an expression of her courageous nature. . . . As one of my friends suggested on hearing the case, perhaps Ginseng is the woman warrior remedy: fierce, protective, enduring. . . . Did courage in these Ginseng cases have a tinge of pathology? Possibly. In the first case, she may have pushed herself too hard, too sure of her own vital, physical strength. Whereas some cultures demand a lot of emotional suppression, as we have seen in some of the English and some of the Asian cultures, perhaps America drives people of talent to "burn out" and pushes most of us to our limits. Aristotle said that core virtues are based on a balance between two extremes. Courage is the balance between recklessness and cowardice on either side.' [Maud Nerman, Osteopathy and Homeopathy: a Marriage of Similars; IFH 1993; RefWorks]

### **Pacemaker of Ageing**

Ageing is a feature inherent to all multi-cellular organisms and is defined as a progressive, generalised impairment of functions resulting in a loss of adaptable responses to stress and a growing risk of functional loss, disease and disablement. No two individuals age in the same way. Genetics and adaptability are key personal factors that determine how well a person ages, while environment and behaviour are major modifiers of biological structures and processes.

Longevity, in Berman's endocrinal view, is 'perhaps largely a matter of preventing or postponing the wane of all of the glands of internal secretion, at least the most important – the thyroid, the pituitary and the adrenals – as well as the gonads.' This may well be a great idea, however, human biology does not support it. Scientific data have conclusively shown that there is a natural decline in many hormones with age, such as oestrogen, testosterone, growth hormone, melatonin, calcitonin and renin. The endocrine system with its variety of hormones is called the 'pacemaker of ageing'. This process of endocrine decline is responsible for many manifestations of ageing. For instance, lean and fat masses, as well as skin elasticity, immune functions, bone density, energy levels and mood swings closely correlate with levels of a number of hormones.

Many women have found out the hard way what happens when attempting to give their bodies a hormone complement appropriate for an age at a time when they are a very different age. Providing post-menopausal women with oestrogen or oestrogen-containing combinations, called Hormone Replacement Therapy [HRT] is such an attempt. For decades this treatment approach was hailed as the panacea for not only the symptoms but also for the ravages of ageing. It was youthfulness in a pill. Recent comprehensive studies, however, have unequivocally demonstrated that the dangers of this include increased risk of breast and uterine cancers, heart attacks as well as other serious diseases.



## Forever Young

Tonic herbs have long been advocated as promoting immunity, longevity and rejuvenation. Invariably included are species of *Aralia*, *Eleutherococcus*, *Ginseng* and *Panax*. Used as flavouring in beverages, sarsaparilla was regarded as a detoxification agent as well as a general peppering up tonic to invigorate and cleanse the body.

Like other evergreens, ivy [*Hedera helix*] symbolises eternal life and resurrection. It also signifies true love, faithfulness and undying affection both in marriage and in friendship. Ivy itself is noted for its vigorous growth habit and longevity. It is nearly indestructible. Famed American writer of the late 19th century, O. Henry, featured Ivy as the main character in his story *The Last Leaf*, which encompasses all of these themes. [see *Hedera helix*]

Traditional Chinese medicine distinguishes a variety of herbs for realising 'deathlessness', among them ginseng. It is said that the continuous use of ginseng 'leads one to longevity with light weight.' With this notion in mind, it is fascinating to look at Lembke's proving of *Ginseng*. There are four entries recorded by all three provers. The time frame shows that it involves the primary action. After 2 hours the 'feeling of weakness entirely disappears and gives place to an agreeable sensation of lightness and clearness of mind.' After the first day, there was a 'peculiar lightness and vigour in the limbs in spite of much walking.' The second day produced a 'peculiar pervading joyous sensation of vigour and elasticity, especially in the upper extremities. There was a peculiar lightness and flexibility of the limbs in the morning, in spite of a bad night.'

It can be safely assumed that a 'pervading joyous sensation of vigour and elasticity' equates a feeling of being young. 'Delusion she is young' is a leading indication for Ginseng in a case by Dr. Prashant Shah. A brief synopsis of the case informs us that, 'She is a spinster aged 47. . . . She is very adventurous in nature in her life as well as in her profession. Signature of disease: Her temperament and adventures give us a feeling of a young and energetic person. That is the state of being in which she likes to stay. So the body has also produced a similar phenomenon. Her reproductive system was not ready to go into a state of menopause [i.e. grow old]. This was the reason for her physical ailment in the form of hot flushes. . . . Many of the following characteristics are not found in the repertory so you may note the following rubrics with pencil in the repertory. I feel it requires a few more experiences before it gets included. These characteristics I have derived from the doctrine of signatures of the remedy and the case. Del. she is young. Energetic. Adventurous. Mannish woman. Courageous. Fearless. Physical exercise >>. On the physical side, she has more eruptions on the right side of the body, as well as face. Second strong physical symptom was dryness of mouth, to the extent, that she had to drink water every hour during sleep.' [cited in RefWorks]

## THEMES & AFFINITIES ARALIACEAE

It has long been a human wish to be forever youthful in mind and body, full of the vitality, verve and enthusiasm that only the idealistic young appear to have. People now live longer, having almost twice the lifespan of 41 years that males had at the turn of the 20th century. The desire is for those extra years to be vigorous years, not ones of ageing incapacity. A universal age-defying stress-buster is needed to fulfil one's wishes.

To be youthful is to be energetic, fearless and flexible. One is able to adapt and bend with changing circumstances, handle the onslaught that life delivers and endure the unendurable. There is strength and courage enough to push oneself to the absolute limit, roll with the punches and persevere in the face of challenges.

The fact remains that human beings age. The mere act of living is dangerous to one's health. Stresses, the constant exposure to cares or worries and a fast-paced, demanding lifestyle slowly erode vitality, causing a progressive, generalised impairment and chronic diminishment of facilities and capacities, both mental and physical. Whatever the name – nervous exhaustion, neurasthenia, chronic fatigue syndrome or simply 'burn out' – the result is the same: weakness, lassitude, forgetfulness and prostration. Such are the ravages of ageing.

Araliaceae won't accept the natural decline wherein youthful vigour and well-being are replaced by ageing debility. Aralia is noted for the 'constant dread of disease.' They seek indestructible, enduring, eternal, ever-lasting life. Clinging to the dream of longevity, all their energy goes to rejuvenation, where it is possible to postpone or prevent the natural wane of functions. There should be resistance to and protection from noxious effects and stresses so that physical and mental capacities are once again raised and restored. Purification, cleansing and even supernatural or spiritual practices are used to try to achieve these ends.

Though equipped with fortified strength to live with high stress, this is not really the best strategy for living. One readily crosses the fine line between helpful and harmful. This route to longevity achieves the opposite by burning out mind and body in the youthful spree of spending energy and vitality. The collapse, the sheer exhaustion, the weakness that follow are practically unsupportable.

A more measured pace, appropriate for each phase of life, allows for the dynamism of youth to yield gracefully and productively to the more settled, calm, contemplative pursuits as one ages. The dilemma for the Araliaceae is how to stay flexible and youthful while embracing all stages of life with open-minded enthusiasm and joy. The wisdom to do this is the true preserver of health and life.

1 Youthful, vitality, enthusiasm, fearless and flexible. Courage, vigour, verve.

- 2 Enduring the unendurable. Fighting against resistance. Perseverance, strength. Adaptability.
- 3 Stress, worries, cares, demands, fast-paced life. Pushed to the limit.
- 4 Generalised impairment, chronic diminishment of facilities and capacities. Ageing.
- 5 Nervous exhaustion, neurasthenia, burn out, weak, forgetful, prostration.
- 6 Indestructible, enduring, ever-lasting life. Longevity. Clinging to Life.
- 7 Strengthening, restoring, enhancing mental and physical capacities.
- 8 Purification, cleansing, supernatural or spiritual practices.
- 9 The fine line between helpful and harmful.
- 10 Pushed to exhaustion. Collapse and exhaustion; fatigue, weakness. Unsupportable.
- 11 Endocrine system, adrenals and thyroid. Cortisone.
- 12 Coldness.
- 13 Constriction.

## *Aralia californica*

*Aralia californica* S. Watson. Elk-clover; California spikenard.

Native range: Western USA – California, Oregon. Habitat: Moist shade, canyons, streamsides. Deciduous herbaceous perennial, to 2–3 m high, with creeping rhizomes and thick stems that are not woody. Laticiferous. Leaves large, papery, 1–3-pinnate, 1–2 m long, 1 m broad; leaflets ovate to oblong, toothed. Flowers small, greenish-white flowers, in large compound umbels 30–45 cm across. Fruit a dark purple or black drupe, with 3–5 seeds.

It has a long history of use among Native Americans in treating upper respiratory complaints, arthritis with a root decoction as a soak, colds, fevers, stomach ailments, itching sores with a wash and to facilitate labour. As a tonic it is said to give great strength to weakened parts and weakened people.

- No symptoms in MM.

## *Aralia hispida*

*Aralia hispida* Vent. Bristly sarsaparilla; dwarf elder; bristly spikenard.

Native range: Eastern North America. Habitat: Fields, hedges, rocky places, roadsides. Herbaceous perennial or semi-woody shrub, to 1 m high, with stem base woody and shrubby, and thickly beset with sharp, stiff bristles. Leaves 2-pinnate; leaflets oblong-ovate, sharply toothed. Flowers greenish-white, in simple, long-stalked, globose umbels. Fruit a round, black drupe with 3 seeds.

Specific eclectic indications include: 'Diffused anasarca; dropsy of cavities; oedema; dropsy with constipation; renal and hepatic torpor; dyspnoea; and pain in the lumbar region.' [King 1898]

- Symptoms in MM from Boerick:
  - ≈ A valuable diuretic, useful in dropsy of the cavities, either due to hepatic or renal disease with constipation.
  - ≈ Urinary disorders, especially with dropsy.

## Aralia nudicaulis

*Aralia nudicaulis* L. Wild sarsaparilla; false sarsaparilla; American sarsaparilla.

Native range: North America. Habitat: Moist or dry woodlands, thickets, riparian areas, prairie or bog edges. Widespread, dominant understorey species throughout the boreal coniferous and mixed-wood forests. Rhizomatous, herbaceous perennial, to 70 cm high, forming extensive colonies. Stemless, flowering stems and leaves arise directly from the rhizome; nudicaulis means naked stem. Leaves ternate, each division 3–5 pinnately divided; leaflets lanceolate-elliptic, finely toothed and about 15 cm long. Leaves go dormant in summer before fruits ripen. Dioecious; flowers greenish-white, in globose umbels. Fruit a bluish-black drupe.

'Possesses alterative properties and is used in decoction or syrup as a substitute for sarsaparilla in all cases where an alterative is required. It is likewise used in pulmonary diseases. Externally, a decoction of it has been found beneficial as a wash in zona [shingles] and in indolent ulcers.' [King 1898]

- No symptoms in MM.

## ARALIA RACEMOSA

<b>Scientific name</b>	<i>Aralia racemosa</i> L.
<b>Common names</b>	American spikenard. Life-of-man. Small spikenard. Petty-morel.
<b>Family</b>	Araliaceae – order Apiales.
<b>Homeopathy</b>	<i>Aralia racemosa</i> – Aral.

### Botanical Features

- Rhizomatous, herbaceous perennial, with few-leaved stems, sometimes becoming woody in basal part.
- Native range: Eastern North America.
- Habitat: Rich wooded slopes, ravines, shaded moist ledges and bluffs.
- Leaves ternate or 1–2-pinnate, rather stiff, both surfaces green.
- Flowers greenish-white, in umbels 12–30 cm across.
- Fruit a brown to purple drupe.

### Medicinal Uses

'Like other close relatives of ginseng, spikenard has shown an ability to stimulate phagocytosis in white blood cells, increase interferon synthesis in infected cells, and increase the capacity for metabolic stress in rats. 9I haven't done too much counselling with rats, but I can vouch for its helping human beings.] This function of spikenard is sometimes adaptogenic, increasing mobilisation but decreasing the metabolic costs of stress responses. This *may* mean [the jury is still out] that moderate amounts of the tincture or tea on a regular basis can strengthen someone with metabolic or chronic disease, whatever the type.

'More prosaic but more predictable, spikenard is a first-class medicine for the initial stages of bronchitis, pneumonia, bronchorrhoea . . . all that stuff we

usually call a "chest cold." The tincture [ $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon in hot water], the tea [2–4 ounces hot], or the honey cough syrup [1–2 teaspoons] works well for adult or child. Conversely, the same amounts will help the individual with moist, tired, chronic coughing; the aged person with impaired pulmonary function; or the heavy smoker or former smoker with a moist, phlegmy cough in the mornings and evenings. For this latter group, the more the sense of chest and lung tiredness, the better spikenard works. . . . A hot tea of the root will usually help start menstruation when the month has been a hard one, with a head cold or sudden change of weather possibly delaying the onset.' [Moore 1989]

### Enlightening Failures

'I happened to read Jones's proving in Hale New Remedies some six or seven years ago and I was much struck with the character of the cough. I fancy the thing that helped to impress it upon my mind was the fact that I had had just at that period a lady under my care who was suffering from a cough that came on after lying down at night. I had been tinkering away at this cough and could not cure it; so I blamed the damp house in which the lady resided and its proximity to a brook prettily hidden among the willows close by. Hyoscyamus, Digitalis and a number of other remedies came into play, but the cough would not budge a bit.

'Need I tell the heart-rending tale that the patient lost faith in her doctor [the writer] and in his much-vaunted pathy, and set about healing herself with quack medicines and orthodox sedative cough mixtures? Of course, I felt humiliated and I therefore made up my mind to read my *Materia Medica* a little more diligently. It was quite evident that the cough was a curable one, for the most careful physical examination failed to detect anything besides a few moist rales that tallied with the moderate amount of expectoration.

'Failures are very instructive at times. Just after having received my congé from this lady, I was reading Hale's New Remedies and came across Dr. S. A. Jones's proving of *Aralia racemosa*, where he says: "At 3 p.m. I took ten drops of the mother tincture in two ounces of water. An interesting book caused me to forget my 'dose'. The events of the night jogged my memory very effectually." He goes on to say that he retired to rest at midnight, feeling as well as ever, but he "had no sooner lain down than he was seized with a fit of asthma." I put down the book – Hale's New Remedies was not quite so thick then as it is now – and said to myself, "That's Mrs. N.'s cough, that is just how she goes. She lies down and forthwith begins to cough, to get laboured breathing and to make her poor hard-toiling husband wish he were a bachelor"; at least he might have wished it, for ought I know to the contrary.

'A little time elapsed and the writer was sent for to see one of this coughing lady's children with eczema. The bairn's common integument having been prescribed for, I timidly inquired about the cough. "Oh," said Mrs. N., "it is as bad as ever; I have tried everything and do not know what to do." I sat down and wrote: Rx Tc. *Aralia racemosa* 2, and it cured cito, tuto, et jucunde [rapid, safe and pleasant] and that not because *Aralia* is good for coughs and has an affinity for the respiratory organs merely, but because it is capable of causing a cough like the one that was to be cured. This happened somewhere about six or

seven years ago and I have since cured this kind of cough with *Aralia* whenever I have come across it and at a rough guess I should say that would be thirty or forty times.' [Compton Burnett 1896]

## MATERIA MEDICA ARALIA RACEMOSA

*Aral.*

### Sources

1 Self-experimentation Jones [USA], tincture; 1870.

2 Clinical observations, including eclectic indications, in Hale.

### Mind

≈ Constant dread of disease [right lung], unable to shake off fear.<sup>1</sup>

### Generals

≈ Drenching perspiration at night.<sup>1</sup>

### Locals

≈ Leucorrhoea, & pressing down pains in uterus. Leucorrhoea, acrid and offensive.<sup>2</sup>

≈ Seized with a fit of asthma as soon as he lies down in bed, upon back.<sup>1</sup>

≈ Dry wheezing respiration, sense of impending suffocation, and rapidly increasing dyspnoea.<sup>1</sup>

≈ Wheezing so laboured as to make the whole bed vibrate. 'Could not possibly lie down; felt that I would suffocate if I did not sit up.'<sup>1</sup>

≈ Discomfort and oppression in right lung when lying on right side and in left lung when lying on left side, with entire relief in opposite lung.<sup>1</sup>

≈ Raw, burning, sore feeling behind whole length of sternum and in each lung, most intense behind sternum, on making a forcible expiration.<sup>1</sup>

### Hay Asthma

'Dr. Jones relates a case of hay asthma, cured by *Aralia*, in which the characteristic symptoms were:

Yearly attacks of suffocative catarrh, with "extreme sensitiveness to a draught, the least current of air causing sneezing, with copious watery, acrid discharge from nostrils and posterior nares, of a salty, acrid taste, excoriating all the passages." Waking at midnight, with suffocative breathing, inability to lie down, and the copious discharge above mentioned. Relief of the asthma by bending forward, elbows on knees. Inspiration more difficult than expiration. When the coryza ceased, the trouble went to the lungs, with dry, wheezing cough, ejecting yellow, thread-like pieces of tough mucus. *Aralia*, 10 drops, three times a day; cured in three days.' [cited in Hale, Vol. II]

### *Aralia spinosa*

*Aralia spinosa* L. Devil's walking-stick; angelica-tree.

Native range: Eastern North America. Habitat: Moist bottomland forests; wooded slopes. Fast-growing, deciduous shrub or small tree, to 8 m high, sending up a loose colony of spiny ash-grey stems from a rhizomatous root system. Aromatic. Stems ringed with distinctive semicircular leaf scars lined with sharp tooth-like spines. Leaves clustered at end of twigs, fern-like, 2-pinnate, to 2 m long, borne on long prickly stems, spiny along ribs; leaflets oval, toothed, dark green above, whitish below. Young leaves bronze-coloured, green in summer, returning to bronze/red mottled with some yellow before falling in autumn. Flowers creamy white, in large compound umbels arranged in terminal clusters 30–60 cm long. Male flowers do not open until some time after the female ones and not before some of the latter, seemingly impatient from delay, have fallen unfertilised. Fruit a purplish-black drupe. Easy to grow and ‘literally thriving on neglect’ as one horticulturist has it. It can hardly be called thriving, if that neglect results in flowers not being pollinated.

‘The fresh bark will produce vomiting and purging; but when dried it is a stimulating alterative, producing a determination toward the surface. The tincture has been used in syphilitic and rheumatic affections, and in some diseases of the skin. The warm infusion, especially when strong, is apt to induce vomiting. The berries in tincture have been found useful in lulling the pain from a decayed tooth; also in various painful affections of other parts. Physicians in Cincinnati made much use of this bark during the cholera of 1849–50, in cases where cathartics were required, but where the action of every purgative was difficult to control; the preparation was composed of 1 dram of compound powder of jalap, 1 dram of aralia spinosa and 2 drams of compound powder of rhubarb. Given in powder, in half-teaspoonful doses; or the powder was infused in half a pint of boiling water, of which infusion, when cold, a tablespoonful was given every half hour. In no case in which it was given did it produce a tendency to looseness or choleraic discharges. It is a powerful sialagogue and is valuable in diseases where the mouth and throat are dry and parched, as a very small portion of the powder will produce a moisture and relieve difficult breathing; also useful in sore throat.’ [King 1898]

- No symptoms in MM.

### **Eleutherococcus senticosus**

*Eleutherococcus senticosus* (Rupr. & Maxim.) Maxim.; syns. *Hedera senticosa* Rupr. & Maxim.; *Acanthopanax senticosus* (Rupr. & Maxim.) Harms. Siberian ginseng; eleuthero.

Native range: E Asia. Habitat: Understorey species in mixed and coniferous mountain forests. Small, woody shrub, prickly, deciduous and slow-growing, 4–6 m high. The oldest stems may be unarmed while the youngest are densely covered with flexible prickles. Palmate leaves, on long, often reddish stalks, usually composed of 5 elliptical leaflets with serrate margins. Flowers small, occurring toward tips of stems in single or paired, long-stalked umbels. Fruit a drupe.

It is commonly marketed as Siberian Ginseng as it has similar herbal properties to those of *Panax ginseng*. In human studies *Eleutherococcus* has been successfully used to treat bone marrow suppression caused by chemotherapy or radiation, angina, hypercholesterolemia and neurasthenia with headache, insomnia and poor appetite. Clinical data support its use as a prophylactic and restorative tonic for enhancement of mental and physical capacities in cases of weakness, exhaustion and tiredness and during convalescence. Traditional uses include treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, insomnia and dream-disturbed sleep, as a carminative in acute and chronic gastritis, as a diuretic, to treat impotence and to regulate blood pressure.

Adverse effects have been described. 'A few cases of insomnia, arrhythmia [including tachycardia], extrasystole and hypertonia were reported in a clinical study involving 64 patients with atherosclerosis, who received a 33% ethanol extract of the crude drug at a dose of 4.5–6.0 ml daily for 6–8 cycles of treatment [lasting 25–35 days]. In another study of 55 patients with rheumatic heart lesions, two patients experienced hypertension, pericardial pain and palpitations, and pressure headaches after ingesting 3 ml of a 33% ethanol extract of the roots daily for 28 days. Insomnia has also been reported as a side-effect in other clinical trials.' [WHO 2004]

- No symptoms in MM.

## GINSENG

<b>Scientific name</b>	<i>Panax quinquefolius</i> L.
<b>Synonyms</b>	<i>Aralia quinquefolia</i> (L.) Decne. & Planch. <i>Panax americanus</i> Raf.
<b>Common name</b>	American ginseng.
<b>Family</b>	Araliaceae – order Apiales.
<b>Homeopathy</b>	Ginseng – Gins.
<b>Scientific name</b>	<i>Panax ginseng</i> C.A. Mey.
<b>Synonyms</b>	<i>Aralia ginseng</i> (C.A. Mey.) Baill. <i>Panax schinseng</i> T. Nees.
<b>Common names</b>	Chinese ginseng. Asian ginseng. Korean ginseng.
<b>Family</b>	Araliaceae – order Apiales.
<b>Homeopathy</b>	Ginseng – Gins.

### Botanical Features

American ginseng

- Herbaceous perennial with spindle-shaped rootstock and round, smooth, green stems, often with a tinge of red, 20–50 cm high.
- Native range: Eastern North America.
- Habitat: Rich, shady hardwood forests.



- Leaves born in whorls, 3–4, palmately compound; leaflets 5 [quinquefolius = with 5 leaves], long-stalked, obovate, sharply serrate, acuminate, smooth on both sides, with scattered bristles on the veins above.
- Flowers small, yellowish-green, in single terminal umbel.
- Fruit a bright-scarlet drupe, ca. 1.2 cm in diameter, with 2–3 semicircular, white seeds.
- Outermost florets ripen first and their fruits often obtain their full size before the central ones are expanded; the central florets are frequently abortive.

Chinese or Asian ginseng

- Herbaceous perennial, 30–60 cm high, thick, fusiform roots and simple stems.
- Native range: Korea and northern China.
- Habitat: Deciduous broad-leaved forests; extremely rare in the wild; mostly cultivated.
- Leaves borne in whorls, 3–6, palmately compound; leaflets 3–5, long-stalked, obovate, 7–20 cm long, serrate.
- Flowers small, yellowish-green, in single terminal umbel.
- Fruit a bright red drupe, globose, about 1.5 cm in diameter, with 2 flat, yellow seeds.
- Outermost florets ripen first and their fruits often obtain their full size before the central ones are expanded; the central florets are frequently abortive.

### Medicinal Uses

'Ginseng is perhaps the most widely recognised plant used in traditional medicine and now plays a major role in the herbal health care market. For more than 2,000 years, various forms have been used in medicine. The name Panax derives from the Greek word for "all healing" and its properties have been no less touted. Ginseng root's man-shaped figure [shen-seng means "man-root"] led proponents of the Doctrine of Signatures, an ancient philosophy, to believe that the root could strengthen any part of the body. Through the ages, the root has been used in the treatment of asthenia [loss of strength], atherosclerosis, blood and bleeding disorders, colitis and to relieve the symptoms of ageing, cancer and senility.

'Ginseng is popularly used for its adaptogenic, anti-neoplastic, immunomodulatory, cardiovascular, CNS, endocrine and ergogenic effects, but these uses have not been confirmed by clinical trials. . . . Note that the profile of particular ginsenosides differs between American and Asian ginseng; however, total ginsenoside content is similar.' [www.drugs.com]

### Adverse Reactions

'The most common adverse reactions with ginseng are nervousness and excitation. However, there have been reports of diffuse mammary nodularity and vaginal bleeding. A hypoglycaemic effect has also been documented. Post-marketing surveillance of CVT-E002 [COLD-fx, a patented, proprietary extract containing mainly oligosaccharides and polysaccharides from North American ginseng] in Canada from 1996 to 2006 led to 100 documented adverse reaction

reports, out of over 200 million doses of CVT-E002 sold. Reactions included abdominal pain, confusion, diuresis, dizziness, drowsiness, headache, insomnia, joint pain, lowered blood pressure, nausea and vomiting.' [www.drugs.com]

### Chinese or American?

Allen states that the American and Chinese species of ginseng are 'probably identical'. They are not, although they are in the same genus. Chemically they are quite similar, both containing ginsenosides as the major biologically active constituents. Steven Foster, an authority on Chinese medicine, asserts that 'American and Asian ginsengs contain some of the same as well as some different ginsenosides, which explains their different actions as expressed in traditional Chinese medicine. Mild American ginseng helps to reduce the heat of the respiratory and digestive systems, whereas the stronger Asian ginseng is a heat-raising tonic for the blood and circulatory systems.' American ginseng is *Panax quinquefolius* L. and Chinese ginseng is *Panax ginseng* C.A. Meyer.

'The naturalist Sheng Neng Pen-T'sao introduced around 100 AD an interesting technique to test the authenticity of the ginseng root: "In order to test for the true ginseng, two persons walk together, one with a piece of ginseng root in his mouth and the other with his mouth empty. If at the end of three to five li [about a mile and a quarter] the one with ginseng in his mouth does not feel himself tired, while the other is out of breath, the ginseng is genuine root." Eastern herbalism met Western culture in 1709 AD when Father Petrus Jartoux [1668–1720], a Jesuit missionary, visited Northern China. He published a Western documentation of *Panax ginseng* in 1713. He noted that ginseng could possibly grow in the mountains and woods of Canada, since they mimic the environment of the Chinese ginseng.

'This observation describes the North American ginseng and would later be discovered as the "cooling" ginseng, or the yin ginseng, completing the "warming" yang ginseng, native to China. Ginseng was an important part of Native American culture. Although there is no formal documentation of ginseng usage in Native American herbal remedies, there is evidence of its influence in the Northeast Culture Area tribes. These inhabitants covered the Atlantic coastal area, across the Appalachians to the Mississippi, from the Great Lakes to the Cumberland River in Tennessee. The tribes of this area were not only hunters and fishermen, but also farmers and herb-gatherers. They utilised herbs for ritualistic ceremonies and for practical purposes, such as prevention and cure of illnesses, wound dressing, treatment of female ailments, increase elderly strength, promote fertility, enhance mental activity, stomach upset and the treatment of ear and eye disorders.' [Gehr 2000]

In 1715 Joseph Francois Lafitau [1681–1746], another Jesuit missionary who worked above Montreal in Canada from 1711–1717, read Jartoux's words, then began a search for ginseng in Canada. In 1716 Lafitau, strolling in the woods near his cabin, found the red-berried plant. American ginseng [*Panax quinquefolius*] was discovered.

According to traditional Chinese medicine, American ginseng is a Yin tonic and cool in nature. Asian ginseng, by contrast, is a Yang tonic and generally warm

or even hot in nature. Adopting the concept of cure by opposites, Ron Teeguarden proclaims that 'American Ginseng is thus useful for people who are hot. In other words, people who tend to have lots of energy, high metabolisms, are aggressive, have high blood pressure and have ruddy complexions can take American Ginseng for its adaptogenic benefits without fear of overheating.'

One of *P. ginseng*'s most common side effects is the inability to sleep. Other adverse effects include dizziness, nausea, diarrhoea, euphoria, headaches, epistaxis, altered blood pressure and breast tenderness. This is a reference to the controversial 'ginseng abuse syndrome'.

### Two Edged Sword

'The presentation of the mild and beneficial nature of ginseng was turned upside down about two centuries later [after its introduction to Europe in 1704]. Ginseng had become exceedingly rare and costly, and, as a result, it had become an object of abuse. Physicians and herb merchants would promise incredible results from using the rare root [which, at the time, was not cultivated and only obtained from remote forests in Northeast China and Korea]. Desperate patients and their families would seek it out and then use as much as possible in an attempt to overcome an obviously debilitating or fatal condition. Ginseng was even described as being able to bring back the dead [probably meaning that it would restore health to someone who appeared to be imminently dying].

'When some of the ailing patients died after taking ginseng, responsibility for the death might be attributed to the ginseng. Hence, ginseng became known as a potentially dangerous herb. Zhang Lu, a physician of the Qing Dynasty period, commented: "Some people look upon ginseng as poison or a sword [two-edged, able to provide help, but also to destroy] and stubbornly refuse to use it."

'Still, its old reputation as a healer for serious conditions and as a preventer of ageing and death was retained. Ginseng eventually became known to the West through the efforts of missionary doctors living in the East. The British doctors Smith and Stuart, working in China at the end of the 19th century, wrote: "Ginseng, with the Chinese, is the medicine par excellence, the dernier ressort [last resort] when all other drugs fail; reserved for the use of the Emperor and his household and conferred by Imperial favour upon high and useful officials whenever they have a serious breakdown that does not yield to ordinary treatment, and which threatens to put a period to their lives and usefulness. . . . The ordinary ginseng of the markets has been studied and has not been found to possess any important medicinal properties. But the Chinese describe cases in which the sick have been practically in articulo mortis, when upon the administration of ginseng they were sufficiently restored to transact final items of business. . . . It is prescribed in nearly every kind of disease of a severe character, with few exceptions, but with many reservations as to the stage of the disease in which it may be administered with the greatest benefit and safety.'" [Dharmananda 2000]

**Sources**

- 1 Proving Jouvé [France], 2 provers, tincture, c. 1834.
- 2 Self-experimentation Lembke [Riga], including effects observed on 'B.' and 'Q.:' tincture; c. 1848.
- 3 Proving Nancy Herrick [USA], 8 provers [6 females, 2 males]; no further details. [Proving conducted with the 'same combination of American and Korean ginseng as had been used in the previous studies.']

**Identity**

The homeopathic materia medica is arranged under the name Ginseng, *Panax quinquefolius*, American ginseng. However, it is doubtful whether American ginseng was the source of the remedy used for the provings, which were done in Europe in the 1830–40s. Dr. M. Jouvé, of Lyon, France, introduced the remedy into homeopathy under the name *Gins-eng*, made from the roots of plants imported from China. Roth, who arranged the symptoms, called it 'Ginseng-chinense'! That Dr. James Lembke, of Riga in what was Russia at the time, probably also used Chinese ginseng can be no more than a likely yet unsubstantiated presumption. In prominent usage in ancient China, Manchuria and other parts of eastern Asia for centuries, Chinese ginseng was introduced into Europe [Paris] in 1704. The remedy nonetheless received its name after the American species, the reason for which must have been T.F. Allen's understandable yet incorrect claim in his Encyclopedia: 'American and Chinese species [are] probably identical.'

**Mind**

- ≈ Mood quiet and contented, & good courage.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Generally calm mood, yet subject to impatient impulses and fear of accidents, & disposition to weep an anxiety about future.<sup>1</sup>
- ≈ Forgetful, forgets things that have just taken place.<sup>1</sup>
- ≈ Increased self-confidence, feels capable. Contented with self. Self-sufficient.<sup>3</sup>
- ≈ Delusions: Body being enlarged; separated from body; being expanded; being a great person; being powerful; of superiority.<sup>3</sup>
- ≈ Impatience with conversations, with people, with small talk.<sup>3</sup>

**Generals**

- ≈ Pressure, tightness, oppression.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Distressing dryness, parts sticking together – mouth, lips, throat; < open air, talking.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Lassitude evoked by coldness.<sup>1</sup>
- ≈ Weakness 4–8 p.m.<sup>3</sup>
- ≈ Right side more affected.<sup>1</sup>
- ≈ Desire for chocolate, meat, red wine. Aversion to flour tortillas.<sup>3</sup>

## Sensations

- ≈ Head as if enlarged and swaying sideways.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Left temple as if too thick.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Reeling in occiput & grey spots before eyes.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Eyes as if pressed inward.<sup>1</sup>
- ≈ Eyes as if cold.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Mouth, tongue, teeth, lips, fauces dry as if covered with sand.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Tightness chest, as if not getting enough air, & anxiety and heaviness limbs.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Cardiac region as if tight on taking a deep breath, must walk about, which >.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Hands as if swollen and skin as if tight on closing hands.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Limbs as if light and flexible, in morning, despite a bad night.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Sense of lightness when walking.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Body as if falling backward when sitting.<sup>2</sup>

## Locals

- ≈ Vertigo on going down winding stairs.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Dull feeling in frontal region, followed by dizziness, sleepiness, and heaviness eyes.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Drawing pain in occiput on mental exertion, involuntarily bends head backwards.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Photophobia in dim weather.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Nose dry and sensitive to passage of air.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Mouth so dry that buttered bread can be swallowed only with difficulty and won't go down further than back part of throat, where it remains stuck.<sup>2</sup>
- ≈ Difficult respiration < sitting, > walking.<sup>2</sup>

## MATERIA MEDICA AMERICAN GINSENG

Panax-q.

## Sources

1 Proving Ibershoff [USA], 10 provers, 1x, 3x, 6x; 1905. Proving substance *Aralia quinquefolia* [Ginseng].

## Mind

- ≈ Restlessness [7 pr.], mentally and physically.
- ≈ Restlessness at night.
- ≈ Erotic dreams [4 pr.] & nocturnal emissions [6 pr.].

## Generals

- ≈ Sleepiness [8 pr.] and lassitude.
- ≈ Motion <.
- ≈ Soreness muscles.
- ≈ Craving for stimulants; drugs; alcoholic drinks.
- ≈ No desire for tobacco [3 pr.].
- ≈ Burning – eyes; nose; mouth; urethra; chest.

## Sensations

- ≈ Eyes as if pushed outward; accommodation diminished.
- ≈ Stomach as if heavy.
- ≈ Legs as if paralysed.

## Locals

- ≈ Dizziness with throbbing in head when rising from reclining posture.
- ≈ Headache from occiput to frontal bone, < motion; muscles of neck sore.
- ≈ Frontal headache [6 pr.] < motion [2 pr.], stooping, cold air [2 pr.].
- ≈ Dryness of right eye; twitching of left. Focusing eyes causes pain.
- ≈ Metallic taste at base of tongue.
- ≈ Obstruction nose < cold air [3 pr.].
- ≈ Right thyroid sore, painful on pressure.
- ≈ Swelling right side of throat.
- ≈ Pain in abdomen near navel when abdomen is contracted.
- ≈ Severe stabbing pain in liver.
- ≈ Burning pain in urethra when urinating [2 pr.].
- ≈ Violent erections during day [4 pr.].
- ≈ Dull aching pain in lumbar region < motion.
- ≈ Pain in left chest and left shoulder, especially during deep exhalation.
- ≈ Burning in chest < deep inhalation.
- ≈ Hands cold with hot fingertips.
- ≈ Pain in right leg down to knee, posteriorly; muscles on front right thigh sore.
- ≈ Cramps left calf; soreness right calf.
- ≈ Skin sensitive to touch of bedclothes [2 pr.].

## Worn Down by Worries

‘We find that the drug [Panax quinquefolius, American ginseng] produces a marked physical depression, also a more marked mental depression. Especially does it seem to cause a hypochondriacal state, as is shown by the symptoms of lassitude, restless and unrefreshing sleep; by the irritability and indisposition to mental or physical labour. These, coupled with the marked effect it produced on the sexual organs, stimulating them primarily, weakening them secondarily, should make ginseng a valuable remedy in treating a large class of sexual hypochondriacs. Four out of the nine provers retained, had amorous dreams and six had continual nocturnal emissions. This was so marked a symptom that some of those who commenced the proving become frightened and refused to continue, which in itself shows that it tended to produce a condition of anxiety which is constantly present in all sexual hypochondriacs. This temporary sexual stimulation has been an old use of the drug, and this fact, in connection with the foregoing, should make it a truly homoeopathic and therefore curative remedy in such cases of sexual weakness which especially react upon the mind, causing lassitude, and uneasy mental condition even to fears of approaching impotence.

The digestive symptoms were few and these were of a depressing nature such as loss of appetite, bad taste, foul breath. There seemed to be a desire for something stimulating yet little or no thirst. Three provers, tobacco users, had no

desire for tobacco during the time they were under influence of the drug.' [W.A. Dewey, *Résumé and Therapeutic Field of Ginseng*; Hom. Dep. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; June 17, 1905]

## HEDERA HELIX

<b>Scientific name</b>	<i>Hedera helix</i> L.
<b>Common names</b>	English ivy. Common ivy.
<b>Family</b>	Araliaceae – order Apiales.
<b>Homeopathy</b>	<i>Hedera helix</i> – Hed.

### Botanical Features

- Woody vine, creeping or climbing, evergreen, with stems up to 20–30 m. Holds on to suitably rough surfaces such as trees, cliffs, walls by means of short adhesive rootlets.
- Native range: Europe; naturalised nearly worldwide.
- Habitat: Shady woodland, coastal woodland and scrub, preferably calcareous and stones; groves and parks.
- Young shoots, petioles, young blades, pedicels and sepals more or less densely hairy.
- Two types of leaves; palmately 5-lobed juvenile leaves on creeping and climbing stems, and unlobed cordate adult leaves on fertile flowering stems exposed to full sun, usually high in crowns of trees or top of rock faces.
- Flowers greenish-yellow, fragrant, mostly 10–15 per umbel; in terminal, globose umbels, solitary or grouped in racemose panicles.
- Fruit a globose drupe, violet-black when ripe.

### Main Constituents

- Triterpene saponins and their glycosides – hederins and hederacosides in leaves and berries.
- Polyacetylenes – faltarinol and derivatives; *see* Apiaceae.
- Flavonoids, mainly rutin.

### Pharmacological Activities

The leaves and berries of English ivy could cause toxicosis if ingested. Symptoms include gastrointestinal upset, diarrhoea, hyperactivity, breathing difficulty, coma, fever, polydipsia, dilated pupils, muscular weakness and lack of coordination. Contact with cell sap may result in severe skin irritation with redness, itching and blisters. Eating the berries may cause burning in the throat.

### Medicinal Uses

The German Commission E reported that skin and mucosa are sensitive to ivy leaf and it performs correspondingly expectorant and spasmolytic activity. The constituent faltarinol has been confirmed as having antibacterial, analgesic and sedative effects. The Commission commends ivy leaf as treatment for catarrhs

of the respiratory passages and for symptoms of chronic inflammatory bronchial conditions. Ivy is suggested as an expectorant, secretolytic and antispasmodic in response to, specifically, whooping cough, spastic bronchitis and chronic catarrh.

Ivy has possible effects as an astringent, micro-vessel protector, anti-oedema and antiseptic. Ivy extracts are major constituents in slimming products, especially those that combat cellulitis. They are found in most of the compositions offered by well-established cosmetic houses. It has vasoconstrictor and anti-exudative properties, and reduces capillary permeability, an action attributed to its rutin and other flavonoids. It is also reported to be an effective moderator of peripheral sensitivity and can improve tolerance to skin massage. It is likewise noted that Ivy extracts activate the circulation, allow drainage of infiltrated tissue and thereby reduce local inflammation, exerting an anti-oedematous effect and lowering tissue sensitivity.

Mezger's claim of ivy containing high iodine concentrations could not be confirmed in the literature. Stephenson, however, observed plenty of thyroid symptoms in Mezger's proving [see below].

### Endocrine System

'Among non-marine plants Hedera has one of the highest concentrations of iodine. From this follows its relationship to the symptoms of hyperthyroidism. Indeed, as a keynote one might call Hedera 'vegetable iodine.' There is marked anxiety particularly about the heart, goitre, exophthalmos, sensations of tension in the throat, increased appetite [or loss of], constipation, constrictions and needle like pains in the heart, palpitations, insomnia, profuse perspiration, a desire for the open air and extreme tiredness.

'Although, from its iodine content one might expect a similarity of symptoms to Iodum, there appears rather to be a contrast. For instance, unlike the coryza of Iodum, which is < open air, Hedera is > open air. There is throat pain on swallowing [Iodum has pain when not swallowing]. Iodum has suppressed as well as increased urination, whereas Hedera urination is increased. Hedera has left ovarian pain; Iodum, right. It is primarily in the cardiac sphere that Hedera and Iodum have a similar action. Both have constriction of the heart with piercing, needle-like pains.

'Hedera has been of great service in myocardial infarction and should be considered along with our other great heart remedies. Hedera also has the organic hypertrophies of Iodum [prostatic as well as thyroid]. Therefore Hedera shares with Iodum many of the pathological signs and symptoms of hyperthyroidism but contrasts with Iodum in the expansion of these into the subtle sphere of subjective, physiological response. In this manner Hedera gives us one more effective agent for the individualisation of the treatment of hyperthyroidism.

'The outstanding symptom not shared either with the clinical symptoms of hyperthyroidism or the symptoms of Iodum is a generalised tingling of the joints, muscles and nerves. Clinically, in homeopathic dilutions, Hedera has been of particular value in hyperthyroidism, gallstones and cholecystitis, and chronic cirrhosis. In gross dilutions it has been used to cure drunkenness, for worms, late



menses, varicose veins and retarded menses.’ [Stephenson, interpretation of Mezger’s proving]

### **Clinging to a Strong Support**

‘The symbolism of the ivy rests on three facts which are that it clings, it thrives in the shade and it is an evergreen. Its clinging has made the ivy a symbol of the traditional, albeit now unpopular, image of the helpless female clinging to her man for protection. It also signifies true love, faithfulness and undying affection both in marriage and in friendship. Christian symbolists consider the ivy’s need to cling to a support emblematic of frail humanity’s need for divine support.

‘Like other evergreens, the ivy symbolises eternal life and resurrection. It has been associated with the Egyptian god Osiris and the Greco-Roman god Attis; both of whom were resurrected from the dead. Medieval Christians, noticing that ivy thrived on dead trees used it to symbolise the immortal soul, which lived even though the body [represented by the dead tree] decayed.

‘In spite of its use as a symbol of immortality, ivy’s association with the grave caused it to be strongly emblematic of mortality. According to Crippen, at Christmas time, ivy, which represents mortality, should be used only on the outside of buildings because this holiday celebrates Jesus, the giver of everlasting life and destroyer of death.

‘Because it thrives in the shade, ivy represents debauchery, carousing, merry-making, sensuality, the flourishing of hidden desires and the enjoyment of secret or forbidden pleasures. Some even believed this plant to have demonic associations. Dionysus [Bacchus] the Greco-Roman god of wine, satyrs and Sileni are often wreathed in ivy. Crowns of ivy were believed to prevent intoxication and thought to aid inspirational thinking. Therefore, the Greeks crowned their poets with wreaths of this plant. Although generally considered poisonous, the ivy’s black berries were used to treat plague.’ [Tucker 1997]

### **Clinging to Life**

As a vigorous, long-lived evergreen plant, ivy is used to symbolise ‘ever-life’ or eternal life and resurrection. Also associated with the indestructible ivy are other undying qualities, such as true love, faithfulness and everlasting affection both in marriage and in friendship. American writer O. Henry [1862–1910] featured ivy as the main character in his short story *The Last Leaf*, which encompasses such themes as courage, faithfulness, undying affection, enduring friendship and the indestructible quality of the gift of love.

Set during a blistery east-coast winter, two young female would-be bohemian artists live in a squatty, old tenement building. Barely scratching a living with their sketches and drawings, they are hit hard when serious cold takes hold of the city. The more delicate of the two contracts pneumonia. As she lies in bed, sinking each day further towards death, she watches through her window an old ivy vine climbing half way up a brick wall. Each day the winter winds take a few more of the leaves from their mooring on the stalk. She knows her life will fly away with the falling of the last leaf.

The building houses another artist, an old man experienced in life but a failure in art. He has befriended the girls, witnessing their youthful optimism from his perch of disillusioned old age. His mantra of years holds that one day he would paint his masterpiece.

The days sweep by, bringing no relief to either the weather or the sick girl. The leaves continue to fall, until there comes the day when only one ivy leaf is left. Both girls are sure the end is near. Stubbornly, the last leaf clings to its stalk, just as the young woman clings to life. A few more days pass and, miraculously, the leaf still hangs on. The enduring persistence and indestructible vigour of the ivy leaf finally melt the young woman's pessimism and embolden her with the courage to get well. And she does, the outcome being a happy ending to the story.

Anyone familiar with O. Henry's style will know that this is not the end of the story. One day, as the young woman is well on the road to recovery, her friend comes to tell her the news. Their neighbour, the old, would-be masterpiece painter, has died the night before of pneumonia. It happened that he caught a deadly chill while outside painting an ivy leaf on the brick wall the night that the last leaf fell. He had been right; he did paint his masterpiece.

## MATERIA MEDICA HEDERA HELIX

Hed.

### Sources

1 Proving Mezger [Germany], 17 provers, tincture, 1x, 6x, 15x; 1932.

### Mind

- ≈ Anxiety about heart.
- ≈ Constantly lives in a state of anxiety and worry.
- ≈ Anxiety uncontrollable.
- ≈ Anxiety & sensation of constriction in throat; & palpitation of heart. Open air >.

### Generals

- ≈ Physical exertion >.
- ≈ During menses >.
- ≈ Restlessness, despite weariness, < waiting.
- ≈ Heat of sun, hot summer weather <.
- ≈ Open air > – mind; head; coryza; cough; general.

### Sensations

- ≈ Throat as if constricted; tension.
- ≈ Heart as if having to beat against a strong resistance.

### Locals

- ≈ Vertigo on bending head, rapid movement of head.
- ≈ Left-sided frontal headache, & coryza, > open air, cold bathing.
- ≈ Nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps > eating.

- ≈ Difficult respiration and cough in a warm room.
- ≈ Needle-like pain in heart region while talking; awakening with it between 3 and 5 a.m.
- ≈ Numbness hands on waking, > motion.

## Hydrocotyle vulgaris

*Hydrocotyle vulgaris* L. Pennywort.

Native range: Europe. Habitat: Sunny, moist or wet places, often on peaty soil. Shores of lakes and streams, fens and temporarily wet depressions. Rhizomatous, herbaceous perennial, creeping or floating. Leaves glabrous, peltate, almost orbicular, coarsely crenate. Inflorescences 1–2 at each node, each consisting of 3–6 flowers; sepals absent. Flowers dark to light violet or almost white, usually with orange glands on the outside. Fruit elliptic, green, covered with brownish glands. Formerly included in Apiaceae, or sometimes separated in the family Hydrocotylaceae, but now transferred to Araliaceae, based on results from molecular studies.

The therapeutic properties are unknown, sometimes confused with those of the closely related *Centella* [previously *Hydrocotyle*] *asiatica* of the Apiaceae.

- No symptoms in MM.

## OPLOPANAX HORRIDUS

<b>Scientific name</b>	<i>Oplopanax horridus</i> (Sm.) Miq.
<b>Synonyms</b>	<i>Echinopanax horridus</i> (Sm.) Decne. & Planch. <i>Fatsia horrida</i> (Sm.) Benth. & Hook. <i>Panax horridum</i> Sm.
<b>Common names</b>	Devil's club. Devil's walking stick.
<b>Family</b>	Araliaceae – order Apiales.
<b>Homeopathy</b>	<i>Oplopanax horridus</i> – Oplo-h.

### Botanical Features

- Deciduous shrub, 1–6 m high, heavily armed with yellowish, needle-like, brittle spines up to 2 cm long.
- Native range: Western North America.
- Habitat: Moist woods, near streams; most abundant in old growth conifer forests.
- Leaves spirally arranged, simple, maple-shaped palmately lobed with 5–13 lobes, 20–40 cm across.
- Flowers small, whitish, in dense, upright, conical-shaped, terminal clusters to 18 cm long.
- Fruit a shiny, flattened, bright red, berry-like drupe in upright, terminal clusters, inedible.
- Entire plant has been described as having a 'primordial' appearance.

## Medicinal Uses

'Devil's club is probably the most important spiritual and medicinal plant to most indigenous peoples who live within its range. Different parts of this plant are used by over 38 linguistic groups for over 34 categories of physical ailment, as well as many spiritual applications. . . . Phytochemical research has revealed that this plant has antifungal, antiviral, antibacterial and anti-mycobacterial properties, and these are undoubtedly related to its widespread use in traditional medicine.

' . . . Among all of the traditional medicinal uses of devil's club, its most widespread is for the treatment of external and internal infections, including tuberculosis. The efficacy of many of the treatments is undoubtedly related to devil's club's significant antibacterial, anti-mycobacterial being active against bacteria in the genus *Mycobacterium*, antifungal and antiviral properties. Devil's club is also commonly used by many cultural groups to treat arthritis, rheumatism, respiratory ailments and as an emetic and purgative. It is also used as an aid in childbirth, post-partum, for internal haemorrhaging, as an analgesic, to treat stomach and digestive tract ailments, broken bones, fever, dandruff, lice, headaches and as a treatment for cancer. Several parts of the shrub, including inner bark, inner bark ash, whole stems, roots, berries and leaves, are used in a variety of ways to effect these treatments. However, the most common type of preparation is as an infusion or decoction of the stem inner bark.

' . . . Western herbalists report that the roots of devil's club and to a lesser extent the inner stem bark are a strong respiratory stimulant and expectorant and recommend their use for rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune conditions, as well as to treat eczema, sores and a number of internal and external infections. Devil's club is also commonly recommended for the treatment of type II adult onset diabetes, a use of devil's club that is also extensive in indigenous communities. . . . Since devil's club is still widely and increasingly, used as a treatment for late onset type II diabetes and is listed in a recent review of anti-diabetic plants, additional research and more rigorous clinical trials are required to validate and characterise or to disprove hypoglycaemic properties in devil's club.' [Lantz 2004]

## Spiritual Uses

'In addition to ethnographic accounts of medicinal uses, there are also numerous sources that describe spiritual applications of devil's club. These include purification and cleansing; protection against supernatural entities, epidemics and evil influences; acquisition of luck; to combat witchcraft; as ceremonial and protective face paint; and in rituals by shamans and others to attain supernatural powers.

'Two of the most widespread spiritual uses are bathing with a devil's club inner bark solution for personal protection and purification, and its use, particularly the spiny or de-spined aerial stems, as an amulet for protection against a variety of external influences. External and internal cleansing involving the use of devil's club was, and is, of paramount importance to many of the cultural groups throughout devil's club's range. The inner stem bark of devil's club has also often been used in solution to wash down fishing boats, fishnets and to purify a house

after an illness or death, and, as charcoal, to prepare protective face paint for ceremonial dancers. John Thomas explained that amongst the Ditidaht, and many other neighbouring groups, devil's club is considered sacred and "along with red ochre paint is considered to be a link between the ordinary, or profane world, and the supernatural, or spirit world.'" [Lantz 2004]

## MATERIA MEDICA OPLOPANAX HORRIDUS

Oplo-h.

### Sources

1 Proving Lucy De Pieri [Canada], 9 provers [8 females, 1 male; 2 placebo], 30c; 2007.

### Mind

- ≈ Positiveness. A total of 7 out of 9 provers experienced an increased sense of confidence, calmness, of being able to easily work through situations that in the past would cause anxiety and irritability. Provers also reported an increased feeling of wellbeing, and being able to relax easily and relax others.
- ≈ Delusions: Body is weightless; being a fish, having fish eyes; lost in the wood; belonging to the opposite sex; stabbed in the back; carrying a heavy weight; being in a different world.
- ≈ Wanting to give up responsibilities [2 pr.].
- ≈ Will-power strong or sensation of having two wills [2 pr.].
- ≈ Dreams: Danger, being unprotected, being vulnerable; danger to others; flood, large areas of water.

### Generals

- ≈ Desire for asparagus; cold beer; white bread; butter; coffee [2 pr.]; garlic; honey; raw mushrooms; prawns; salami; sweets [3 pr.].
- ≈ Sexual desire increased in menopausal and post-menopausal women [3 pr.]; orgasm reached easier.

### Sensations

- ≈ Brain as if loose, < motion.
- ≈ Dust in eyes.
- ≈ Hot steam out of ears.
- ≈ Lips as if chapped, dry [while not].
- ≈ Tongue underneath numb, as if burned.
- ≈ Throat as if empty.
- ≈ Bladder as if distended.
- ≈ Hips and thighs unbending as if steel rods.
- ≈ Coldness in bones.

### Locals

- ≈ Vertigo & redness eyes, involuntary closing of eyes, > cold application; & hunger; & sensation of heat in nape of neck, > cold washing.

- ≈ Vertigo in room, > open air; & nausea, < indoors, in car, > open air.
- ≈ Headache above eyebrows, < heat, smell of food, walking, > cold, dry applications, lying down, pressure; & desire to pull hair from back of head.
- ≈ Dull pain occiput, extending to forehead, > alcohol, sleep.
- ≈ Congestion nose on waking [3 pr.].
- ≈ Throat sensitive, < cold air, cold drinks, dryness, smoke, swallowing, touch.
- ≈ Bursting pain stomach < walking, > lying down.
- ≈ Constipation, stool remains long in rectum without urging.
- ≈ Pain knees, stitching on first movement, < cold, > lying down, covering.

### **Impression**

'Dullness was a common sensation that the provers experienced, so it is not surprising that there was a need for stimulants. Provers had craving for beer and coffee even if they didn't usually drink coffee, or had aversion for coffee prior to the proving. Depleted, drained together with vertigo or being light-headed was often experienced before breakfast or a meal. Note the language of water by using the term "drained". The sensations were resolved with eating. Other sensations were pinching, pulsating, cramping, like a pin prick, sore, stinging, dryness or dust in eyes, brain loose and moving back and forth, bitterness, tingling, as if burned, numbness, something stuck, rawness, tickling and chilly.' [Lucy De Pieri]



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