ELDERBERRY
(Sambucus nigra)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Immunomodulating
- Antiviral
- Antibacterial
- Antioxidant
- Anti-inflammatory
- Diuretic

Indications

- Colds, and influenza, and the symptoms associated with them including aches and pains, coughing, nasal congestion, catarrh and fever
- Supports healthy immunity
- Herpes virus infections

Traditional Use

Various parts of the elder plant have been used for thousands of years by Native Americans and people of the Mediterranean basin and surrounding regions. It continues to be commonly gathered as a food and medicine and, according to ethnobotanical research, is currently one of the most used medicinal plants worldwide where the berries are used primarily as antiviral agents for colds, influenza and Herpes virus infection. Elder flowers and berries have long been used in the English countryside for making many homemade drinks and preserves.

Energetics

Cooling, drying, sour.

Constituents

Constituents of the berries include the polyphenolic antioxidant flavonoids quercetin and rutin, anthocyanins (responsible for the colour of the fruit) identified as cyanidin 3-glucoside and cyanidin 3-sambubioside, the hemagglutinin protein *Sambucus nigra* agglutinin III (SNA-III), cyanogenic glycosides including sambunigrin, viburnic acid and vitamins (A, B1, B2, B6, B9, C and E), trace elements such as Cu, Zn, Fe and minerals such as K, Ca and Mg to phytochemicals such as carotenoids, phytosterols and polyphenols.

Use in Pregnancy

Information regarding safety and efficacy in pregnancy is lacking however there is no data suggesting that elderberry would have an adverse effect on pregnancy.

Contraindications and Cautions

None known for properly prepared elderberry at therapeutic dosages.

Drug Interactions

Caution with immunosuppressant drugs.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 25% alcohol and 60% glycerol 40 to 160mL weekly