

ELECAMPANE

(Inula helenium)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Expectorant
- Antispasmodic
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antitussive
- Diaphoretic
- Antimicrobial
- Diuretic
- Carminative
- Vermifuge
- Emmenagogue

Indications

- Respiratory disorders including deep seated respiratory infections; persistent, congested, stubborn wet or dry coughs; post nasal drip; tuberculosis; bronchitis; whooping cough; the common cold, influenza and other respiratory infections; fever with chills; swollen lymph nodes
- Weak, stagnant digestion; to support healthy gut flora (prebiotic), excess gas, intestinal parasites, nausea, diarrhoea, peptic ulcer
- Urinary and pelvic stagnation
- Convalescence and malnutrition

Traditional Use

One explanation for the Latin name *helenium* comes from the legend of Helen of Troy (she of the face that launched a thousand ships) who was said to be wearing an elecampane flower in her hair when she was abducted from her homeland by the Trojan prince Paris which started the Trojan wars. The legend says that she was so heartbroken to be taken from Sparta that one of these plants emerged wherever her tears fell.

Energetics

Warming, drying, pungent, bitter, sweet.

Constituents

Sesquiterpene lactones, mainly alantolactone and isoalantolactone (collectively known as helenin), polysaccharides, volatile oil, mucilage, sterols, saponins and resins.

Use in Pregnancy

It is traditionally known as a uterine stimulant to promote menstruation so its use is not recommended in pregnancy.

Contraindications and Cautions

Should be avoided by those with sensitivity to other plants in the Asteraceae family.

Drug Interactions

Caution with central nervous system depressant drugs.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 30% alcohol
20 to 80mL weekly