

Alternatives to Aloe

Honey is one alternative; less desirable choices include echinacea and St. John's wort for wound healing acceleration and to prevent scarring.

CRYPTOLEPSIS (*Cryptolepis sanguinolenta*)

Family: Asclepiadaceae.

Part used: The root.

Collection: *Cryptolepis* is a twining and scrambling shrub that grows throughout many parts of Africa, primarily along the western coast; the root may be harvested at any time of year.

Actions: Antiparasitic, antimalarial, antibacterial, antifungal.

Active against: Malaria, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Shigella dysenteriae*, *Neisseria gonorrhoea*, *Escherichia coli*, *Candida albicans*, *Campylobacter*, both gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria.

About *Cryptolepis*

Cryptolepis has been used for centuries by traditional African healers in the successful treatment of malaria, fevers, and bloody diarrhea (*sanguinolenta* means “tinged or mixed with blood, bloody”). With the increasing resistance of the malarial parasite to synthetic drugs, medical researchers throughout the world have turned to traditional medicines to find treatment alternatives. *Cryptolepis* has been found to be remarkably potent for malaria in human clinical trials. One such trial compared the effectiveness of *cryptolepis* with chloroquine, the usual synthetic drug for malaria treatment, in comparative patient populations at the outpatient clinic of the Centre for Scientific Research into Plant Medicine at Mampong-Akwapim in Ghana, West Africa. Clinical symptoms were relieved in 36 hours with *cryptolepis* and in 48 hours with chloroquine. Parasitic clearance time was 3.3 days in the patients given *cryptolepis* and 2.3 days in the patients given chloroquine — a remarkably comparable time period. Forty percent of the patients using chloroquine reported unpleasant side effects necessitating other medications; those using *cryptolepis* reported *no* side effects.