

### *Preparation and Dosages*

Red root is used as tincture, tea, strong decoction, gargle, or capsules.

**Tincture:** Dry root, 1:5 with 50 percent alcohol, 30 to 90 drops up to 4 times a day.

**Tea:** 1 teaspoon powdered root in 8 ounces (237 ml) water, simmer 15 minutes, strain. Drink up to 6 cups per day.

**Strong decoction:** 1 ounce (25 g) herb in 16 ounces (473 ml) water, simmer slowly 30 minutes covered. One tablespoon (15 ml) 3 or 4 times per day.

**Gargle:** In tonsillitis or throat inflammations, gargle with strong tea 4 to 6 times per day.

**Capsules:** 10 to 30 double-ought capsules per day.

### *Side Effects and Contraindications*

No side effects have ever been noted. However, Michael Moore suggests caution by people using blood coagulants and advises against the use of large doses in pregnancy, because of its astringent action.

### *Alternatives to Red Root*

Any red root species. One species, *Ceanothus thrysiflorus* (California lilac), has historically been successful in the treatment of malignant diphtheria. Other alternatives: cleavers, which is much milder (a food herb), poke root, which is much stronger (a drug herb) and should be used with care.

### Identifying Red Root in the Wild

Red root can be a low-lying shrub or a tallish bush. The only thing that is reliably similar between species are the unique tiny, triangular seed pods. When ripe they are the same color as the tincture: a brilliant burgundy red. It is pervasive in its range. All species can be used interchangeably. It is a potent and useful member of any herbal repertory and one of my "if I could only choose ten herbs" list.