## *Uncaria tomentosa* (Willd.) DC.

### Cat's Claw Stem Bark

*Cortex Uncariae tomentosae*

*Rubiaceae*

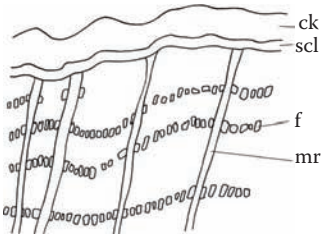
Cat's claw was traditionally used in South America, where it was known as *para todo* (for all), alluding to its use for a wide variety of ailments. It was introduced in the United States in the early 1990s, whence it gained a reputation as an antiviral. Research suggests it has macrophage-stimulating activity. Both root and stem bark of this plant are used. However, due to the relative ecological sensitivity of the plant, there are restrictions on the exportation of root material from Peru. The following characterization was developed on stem bark.

**Transverse section:** Cork and cortex are absent when only inner bark is present; phelloderm consists of several rows of polygonal, thickened, and pitted sclereids; secondary phloem has a regular structure of rays alternating with regions of parenchyma and fibers; the fibers are arranged in tangential rows separated by parenchyma; within each row, the fibers occur in small, radially elongated, rectangular groups separated by small patches of parenchyma; rows of such groups are punctuated by medullary rays; fibers are considerably thickened, showing a clear differentiation between the primary and secondary cell wall; some parenchyma cells contain red-brown amorphous material or calcium oxalate crystals; crystals are predominantly crystal sand or, infrequently, prisms up to 40 µm long.

**Longitudinal section:** Fibers have conspicuous pit channels.

**Starch:** Granules are solitary or compound in aggregates of up to four granules; single granules more or less spherical or ovate, up to 15 µm long.

**Powder:** Brown fragments with fibers; pitted fibers solitary or in groups; sclereids; calcium oxalate crystal sand and prisms; starch.



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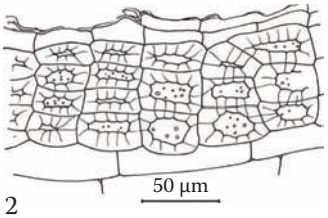

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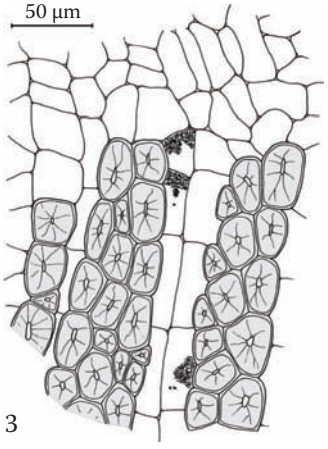

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