



Buckthorn Bark

Known as a mild, but *effective, laxative* that efficiently and thoroughly evacuates the intestines and bowel, relieving both chronic and atonic constipation. It also stimulates the production of bile secretions, which promote *healthy gallbladder and liver functions*, helping to relieve jaundice and hepatitis.

Information: Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

Botanical: *Rhamnus frangula* (also known as *Frangula alnus*)

Family: *Rhamnaceae* (buckthorn)

Other common names: Alder Buckthorn, Frangula Bark, Black Alder, Glossy Buckthorn, Black Dogwood, European Alder Buckthorn

History: The alder Buckthorn is a small, deciduous tree or coarse shrub that is native to Europe, North Africa, and Central Asia, but was introduced to North America before 1800, invading native habitats by the early 1900s. In Gray's *Manual of Botany* (8th edition), Buckthorn Bark was described as "recently and rapidly spreading; likely to become obnoxious." Buckthorn Bark was listed in both the *British Pharmacopoeia* and the *United States Pharmacopoeia* for its cathartic properties. The ripe berries and unripe berries yield dyes of varying colors that were widely used for woollens in Europe. Buckthorn Bark (*Frangula alnus*) and *Rhamnus cathartica* (Common Buckthorn) are similar species of the Buckthorn family, with similar properties (although *Frangula alnus/Rhamnus frangula* is considered milder in its cathartic actions than its cousin) and is distinguished by its lack of thorns. Another species is the California Buckthorn, *Rhamnus purshiana*, better known as Cascara Sagrada, which has somewhat overshadowed its cousin, Buckthorn Bark, but its actions are considered similar. Some of the constituents in Buckthorn Bark include a crystalline glucoside (frangulin), anthraquinones (including emodin, Aloe-emodin, rhamnicoside, frangula-emodin, alaterin, chrysophanol, rein, etc.) flavonoid glycosides, resins and tannic acid.

Beneficial Uses: Buckthorn Bark is mainly used as an aperient that acts as a laxative without the harsh purging actions often associated with laxatives. It is mild, but effectively causes rapid evacuation of the bowels. The basis of the herb's efficacy is thought to be the presence of anthraquinones - either free (i.e., aloe-emodin) that remain in the intestines and irritate the intestinal wall to stimulate elimination - or as sugar derivatives (glycosides), which are absorbed into the intestines and bloodstream and go on to stimulate the nerve center in the lower part of the intestine. As such, Buckthorn Bark is said to be effective in cases of chronic constipation and atonic constipation, which is caused by inadequate intake of fluids, poor diet, or overuse of purgatives that result in loss of natural reflexes. It is also thought to ease abdominal bloating.

The tannins in Buckthorn Bark are believed to have astringent properties and have been used to treat hemorrhoids.

Buckthorn Bark is believed to stimulate the liver and gallbladder. The herb is said to be beneficial for treating liver disorders, such as jaundice, hepatitis, cirrhosis, etc. It is also thought to help a sluggish

gallbladder by increasing the flow of bile and has been said to help the body rid itself of gallstones.

Used externally, Buckthorn Bark is considered an antiseptic that alleviates gum disease and scalp infestation.

Contraindications: Pregnant and nursing women should not use Buckthorn Bark, nor should those who suffer from colitis, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis or appendicitis. Excessive use (more than ten days) is not recommended, as it may cause electrolyte and potassium loss.