

# Sassafras



**Sassafras** has been used for centuries as a tonic to *cleanse the liver and blood*, which thus helps to alleviate internally caused *skin ailments, such as acne, eczema and psoriasis*, as well as relieve *gout, arthritis, rheumatism, and liver ailments*. It is said to help the body rid itself of *toxins and pollutants through efficient removal of wastes*.

**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](http://www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com) (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

**Family:** Lauraceae (laurel)

**Other common names:** Cinnamon Wood, Fennel Wood, Ague Tree, Smelling Stick, White Sassafras, Red Sassafras, Silky Sassafras, Saxifrax

**History:** Sassafras is one of three species of laurel and the only one that is native to eastern North America (the other two are found in eastern Asia). When the Spanish arrived in Florida in the early sixteenth century, they discovered the fragrant Sassafras tree but mistook it for a cinnamon tree, which has given it one of its common names, Cinnamon Wood. The name, Sassafras, was given to us by the sixteenth-century botanist, Nicolas Monardes, and is said to be a corruption of the Spanish word for saxifrage, another plant species. Native Americans added many drugs to our modern pharmacopoeia, including Sassafras, and they used the bark as a general tonic and as a diaphoretic and diuretic or "blood purifier," by urinating or sweating out impurities from the system. They also used it to remedy malaria and skin diseases. Word soon spread about the plant's amazing curative powers, reaching Europe, and Sassafras may have been the first American plant drug to reach the Old World, where it was widely used as a medicine, first in Spain in the 1500s, and under cultivation in England before

1633. For a time it became a major colonial export, second only to tobacco. Europeans also created Sassafras tea, which soon became highly fashionable but lost its luster when Sassafras also gained the reputation as a cure for syphilis (unjustified). Early settlers considered the root bark as a virtual cure-all and also fermented the roots with molasses to make beer, and during the Civil War Sassafras tea became a popular beverage. Oil extracted from the bark of the roots (eighty percent of which is safrole) remained in use as an antiseptic for dentistry and as a flavoring for toothpastes, root beer and chewing gum until the early 1960s, when the FDA banned its use as an additive, as safrole was found to be a carcinogen. The root bark extract and leaves are now treated commercially to produce a safrole-free product, and today, the safrole-free root extract is used in herbal medicines, perfumery and as a flavoring agent for candy, beverages and aromatic teas, and the leaves are used for *filé* powder (an important thickening ingredient in the Creole dish, *filé gumbo*). It is not possible to make safrole-free Sassafras at home. Sassafras from Herbal Extracts Plus, which is derived from the leaves of the plant, is

totally safrole-free. Sassafras is a sweet, aromatic, warming herb (with a fennel-like fragrance) and contains lignins, sitosterol, tannin, resin, alkaloids (boldine, cinnamolaurine) and volatile oil.

**Beneficial Uses:** Sassafras has been used as a general tonic that restores and nourishes the body's overall good health. More importantly, it has also been used as an alterative, or agent that cleanses and stimulates the efficient removal of waste products from the system and purifies the blood, frequently favorably altering overall health.

As a diuretic, Sassafras promotes increased urine flow and helps to rid the kidneys and bladder of impurities, and this action also facilitates the flushing of uric acid and other toxins from the system, which makes it most useful in the treatment of gout, arthritis and rheumatic conditions. Moreover, these blood-cleansing qualities are also believed to make it an excellent treatment for all internally caused skin disorders such as acne, eczema and psoriasis.

The diuretic action of increased urine flow, in addition to Sassafras's antiseptic properties, helps to clear the urinary tract of various infections, such as cystitis, etc.

Sassafras is a diaphoretic that stimulates perspiration and sweating, which not only cools the body and lowers fever, but also helps to expel toxic wastes through the skin. It should be pointed that all the above cleansing actions work to purify the blood and rid the body of pollutants.

Sassafras has been known to help gastrointestinal complaints, particularly as a carminative, or substance that relieves intestinal gas pain and distension.

Sassafras is considered an antiseptic or substance that combats and neutralizes pathogenic bacteria and prevents infection. It has been used to treat syphilis, gonorrhoea and dysentery.

Regarding women's health, Sassafras has been used to correct dysmenorrhoea, a condition marked by painful and difficult menstruation, usually by promoting and regulating menstrual flow.

There are some claims that Sassafras may have antiviral properties, helping to relieve herpes, measles and shingles.

**Contraindications:** Pregnant and nursing women should avoid Sassafras, and excessive use (many times the recommended dosage) may produce a narcotic effect. Sassafras should not be used for a prolonged period of time. Rare side effects have included vomiting, changes in your vision or heart rate (pulse), blood pressure, trouble walking or hallucinations. Sassafras has the potential to interact with many prescription medicines broken down by the liver. Do not give Sassafras to children.

The information presented here by [www.DrMarilynTucker.com](http://www.DrMarilynTucker.com) is intended for educational purposes only. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA and are not intended to diagnose, cure, treat or prevent disease. Individual results vary.