



Plants For A Future

*Edible, medicinal and useful plants
for a healthier world*

[Full Contact Details](#)
Registered Charity
No. 1057719

Back to main [Search Page](#)

Eleutherococcus senticosus - (Rupr. & Maxim.) Maxim.

Siberian Ginseng

Author	(Rupr. & Maxim.) Maxim.	Botanical references	11, 58, 200
Family	Araliaceae	Genus	Eleutherococcus
Synonyms	<i>Acanthopanax senticosus</i> - (Rupr. & Maxim.) Harms.		
Known Hazards	None known		
Range	E. Asia - China, Japan, Siberia.		
Habitat	Mixed and coniferous mountain forests, forming small undergrowth or groups in thickets and edges. Sometimes found in oak groves at the foot of cliffs, very rarely in high forest riparian woodland[74].		
Edibility Rating	 2 (1-5)	Medicinal Rating	 5 (1-5)

Physical Characteristics



A deciduous Shrub growing to 2m at a slow rate.

It is hardy to zone 3. It is in flower in July. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Insects.

The plant prefers light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils and can grow in nutritionally poor soil. The plant prefers acid,

Home page

Database Name:

Keyword:

- [Search Page](#)
- [Index of Latin Names](#)
- [Index of Common Name](#)
- [Families](#)
- [US Database](#)
- [Download](#)

Plants

- [Edible Uses](#)
- [Medicinal Uses](#)
- [Other Uses](#)
- [Top 20 Plants](#)

Gardening

- [Woodland Gardening](#)
- [Vegan Organics](#)
- [Perennial Plants](#)
- [Habitat](#)

Links

- [New Links](#)
- [Old Links Page](#)
- [Plant Suppliers Databases](#)
- [News Groups and mailing lists](#)
- [UK Organizations](#)

About Us

The Book
Membership
Cornwall Site
Devon Site
Other Leaflets

Mailing list
Yahoo List



Help keep this site running by making a donation with paypal.

neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It requires moist soil. It can tolerate atmospheric pollution.

Habitats

Woodland Garden; Sunny Edge; Dappled Shade; Shady Edge;

Edible Uses

Edible Parts: [Leaves](#).

Edible Uses: [Tea](#).

Young leaves and buds - cooked[105, 177]. The dried leaves are used as a tea substitute[105, 177].

Medicinal Uses

[Adaptogen](#); [Antiinflammatory](#); [Hypoglycaemic](#); [Tonic](#); [Vasodilator](#).

Siberian ginseng is a powerful tonic herb with an impressive range of health benefits. Unlike many herbs with a medicinal use, it is more useful for maintaining good health rather than treating ill health. Research has shown that it stimulates resistance to stress and so it is now widely used as a tonic in times of stress and pressure[254]. This plant is a very commonly used folk treatment in China and Russia where it is used as a ginseng substitute[218]. It is a pungent bitter-sweet warming herb that is said to be stronger in its action than ginseng[238]. Regular use is said to restore vigour, improve the memory and increase longevity[218]. The root and the root bark are adaptogen, anti-inflammatory, hypoglycaemic, tonic and vasodilator. It is taken internally during convalescence and in the treatment of menopausal problems, geriatric debility, physical and mental stress etc[238]. It works by strengthening the bodies natural immune system[140, 165, 176, 238]. It has also been used to combat radiation sickness and exposure to toxic chemicals[200, 218, 238]. This herb is not prescribed for children, and should not be used for more than 3 weeks at one time[238]. Caffeine should not be taken when using this herb[238]. The roots are harvested in the autumn and dried for later use[238].

Other Uses

None known

Cultivation details

Prefers a light warm open loamy humus-rich soil and a position sheltered from north and east winds[11, 200]. Prefers a well-drained soil and full sun[200]. (A surprising report, this species is a woodland plant and we would expect it to prefer shade[K]) Tolerates urban pollution and poor soils[200]. Plants are hardy to at least -15°C if they are sheltered from cold winds[200]. A highly polymorphic species

[74]. Siberian ginseng is cultivated as a medicinal plant in Russia and China[140].

Propagation

Seed - best sown as soon as it is ripe in the autumn in a cold frame [200]. It can be slow to germinate. Stored seed requires 6 months warm followed by 3 months cold stratification[113] and can be very slow to germinate[133]. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle and grow them on in light shade in a cold frame or greenhouse for at least the first winter. Plant out in late spring or early summer. Cuttings of half-ripe wood, July/August in a frame[113, 200]. Cuttings of ripe wood of the current season's growth, 15 - 30cm long in a cold frame[238]. Root cuttings in late winter[200]. Division of suckers in the dormant season[200].

Links

References

[K] **Ken Fern**

Notes from observations, tasting etc at Plants For A Future and on field trips.

[11] **Bean. W.** *Trees and Shrubs Hardy in Great Britain. Vol 1 - 4 and Supplement.* Murray 1981

A classic with a wealth of information on the plants, but poor on pictures.

[58] **Ohwi. G.** *Flora of Japan. (English translation)* Smithsonian Institution 1965

The standard work. Brilliant, but not for the casual reader.

[74] **Komarov. V. L.** *Flora of the USSR.* Israel Program for Scientific Translation 1968

An immense (25 or more large volumes) and not yet completed translation of the Russian flora. Full of information on plant uses and habitats but heavy going for casual readers.

[105] **Tanaka. T.** *Tanaka's Cyclopaedia of Edible Plants of the World.* Keigaku Publishing 1976

The most comprehensive guide to edible plants I've come across. Only the briefest entry for each species, though, and some of the entries are more than a little dubious. Not for the casual reader.

[113] **Dirr. M. A. and Heuser. M. W.** *The Reference Manual of Woody Plant Propagation.* Athens Ga. Varsity Press 1987 ISBN 0942375009

A very detailed book on propagating trees. Not for the casual reader.

[133] **Rice. G. (Editor)** *Growing from Seed. Volume 1.* Thompson and Morgan. 1987

Very readable magazine with lots of information on propagation.

[140] **Kamen. B.** *Siberian Ginseng.* 0

Detailed information for the lay person on this medicinal plant that is so widely used in the Orient and Russia.

[165] **Mills. S. Y.** *The Dictionary of Modern Herbalism.* 0
An excellent small herbal.

[176] **Yeung. Him-Che.** *Handbook of Chinese Herbs and Formulas.*
Institute of Chinese Medicine, Los Angeles 1985
An excellent Chinese herbal giving information on over 500 species.
Rather technical and probably best suited to the more accomplished user of herbs.

[177] **Kunkel. G.** *Plants for Human Consumption.* Koeltz Scientific Books 1984 ISBN 3874292169
An excellent book for the dedicated. A comprehensive listing of latin names with a brief list of edible parts.

[200] **Huxley. A.** *The New RHS Dictionary of Gardening.* 1992.
MacMillan Press 1992 ISBN 0-333-47494-5
Excellent and very comprehensive, though it contains a number of silly mistakes. Readable yet also very detailed.

[218] **Duke. J. A. and Ayensu. E. S.** *Medicinal Plants of China*
Reference Publications, Inc. 1985 ISBN 0-917256-20-4
Details of over 1,200 medicinal plants of China and brief details of their uses. Often includes an analysis, or at least a list of constituents. Heavy going if you are not into the subject.

[238] **Bown. D.** *Encyclopaedia of Herbs and their Uses.* Dorling Kindersley, London. 1995 ISBN 0-7513-020-31
A very well presented and informative book on herbs from around the globe. Plenty in it for both the casual reader and the serious student. Just one main quibble is the silly way of having two separate entries for each plant.

[254] **Chevallier. A.** *The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants* Dorling Kindersley. London 1996 ISBN 9-780751-303148
An excellent guide to over 500 of the more well known medicinal herbs from around the world.

Readers Comments

Eleutherococcus senticosus

Thu Sep 21 2006

why should caffeine not be taken with this herb?? i've been looking and can't find out why. if anyone knows, please e-mail me at mshepard@uncc.edu. (the energy drink Rockstar has this herb and caffeine in it) thanks.

Eleutherococcus senticosus

Bob Maljaars Mon Oct 23 2006

We are interested in growing this plant and developing adaptogens. Can you point us in the right direction?

Eleutherococcus senticosus

david nicholls Mon Mar 26 2007

Ref caffeine & Eleutherococcus. I am also very interested to know about this supposed incompatibility. It is in some health tablets I am taking and I drink loads of coffee, they say nothing about contraindications on the pack, though they would to avoid being sued or worse if there was a problem. I've not noticed any ill effect. This would be a serious problem for the plant if there is a problem since caffeine is the official religion of the west.

Eleutherococcus senticosus

david nicholls Mon Mar 26 2007

Ref caffeine & Eleutherococcus. I am also very interested to know about this supposed incompatibility. It is in some health tablets I am taking and I drink loads of coffee, they say nothing about contraindications on the pack, though they would to avoid being sued or worse if there was a problem. I've not noticed any ill effect. This would be a serious problem for the plant if there is a problem since caffeine is the official religion of the west.

Eleutherococcus senticosus

Ken Fern, Plants for a Future Mon Mar 26 2007

As far as I understand it, the main problem with using caffeine at the same time as taking this herb is because the caffeine reduces the effect of Siberian Ginseng. The reports I have read do not explain why this should be, but looking at the scientific work on Siberian Ginseng, there is quite a lot of recent evidence that the plant has a sedative action on the central nervous system. If this is part of its overall medicinal effect upon the body, then caffeine will directly counteract it since it acts as a stimulant upon the CNS. This is conjecture upon my part, since I have found no reports of this. However, it does seem a distinct possibility.

Eleutherococcus senticosus

Andreda Thu Apr 26 2007

Why should this herb not be taken for longer than three weeks? And does that apply when it is used in a mixture of herbs or liquid drink?

Add a comment/link:

Enter your comment about this page here.

Note: please don't expect a quick reply to comments/questions posted here? We don't have the resources to answer questions ourselves. You can ask questions on our [mailing list](#).

Subject: Eleutherococcus senticosus

Links To add a link to another website with useful info add the details here.

Name of Site:

URL for Site:

Details:

**Your Name:
email address:**

Email address added here will not be displayed on the website or be passed to third parties.

They are used incase we need to get in touch with you.

To prevent spam all comments are moderated, comments with spam or swearing are blocked.

Discussion Monitor

To have posts to this page mailed to you enter your email address here:

email address:

(Your email address will not appear on the webpage or be passed on to third parties).

All the information contained in these pages is [Copyright](#) (C) Plants For A Future, 1996-2003. Last modified: June 2004 (may well have been modified since!)

Plants For A Future is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales. Charity No. 1057719, Company No. 3204567,

HTML version prepared by Rich Morris - [Home Page](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons License](#). You can copy, distribute, display this works but: Attribution is required, its for Non-Commercial purposes, and it's Share Alike (GNUish/copyleft) i.e. has an identical license. We also ask that you let us know (webmaster@pfaf.org) if you link to, redistribute, make a derived work or do anything groovy with this information.