

Uncaria tomentosa (Willd.) DC.

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Uncaria tomentosa, commonly known as una de gato or cat's claw, is a wooded vine from the Amazon River basin in botanical nomenclature classified into Rubiaceae family and Cinchonoideae subfamily.

- Family: Rubiaceae
- Subfamily: Cinchonoideae
- Genus: Uncaria
- Species: tomentosa
- Synonyms: *Uncaria surinamensis*, *Nauclea aculeata*, *N. tomentosa*, *Ourouparia tomentosa*
- Common Names: cat's claw, hawk's claw, uña de gato, paraguay, garabato, garbato casha, samento, saventaro, toroñ, tambor huasca, uña huasca, uña de gavilan, hawk's claw, vilcacora

For over two thousand years, among many Amazonian tribes like Asháninka, Aguaruna, Cashibo and Shipibo, this species has been deeply believed to have magical and amazing healing features. Recently, medical preparations from *U. tomentosa* have become very popular in Europe and America, particularly as an anticancer remedy. The list of treated diseases include for instance gastric ulcers, diarrhea, gonorrhoea, arthritis and rheumatism, acne, diseases of the urinary tract and cancers. The most often way of cat's claw medical administration is drinking its decoctions prepared through boiling in water or by macerating in alcohol the inner bark or the root bark. Sometimes it is used in combination with other ingredients such as chuchuhuasi bark, capsaicin, burdock root, sheep sorrel or slippery elm bark.

Numerous investigations have been carried out to isolate and determine secondary metabolites of *Uncaria tomentosa*. So far, over fifty identified compounds have been already reported including oxindole alkaloids (speciophylline, mitraphylline, uncarine F, pteropodine, isomitraphylline, uncarine E), ursane type pentacyclic triterpenes with a variety of ursolic acid derivatives, quinovic acid glycosides, sterols and procyanidins.

These compounds may be responsible for many pharmaceutical properties described in literature. Cat's claw contains ajmalicine, akuammigine, campesterol, catechin, carboxyl

alkyl esters, chlorogenic acid, cinchonain, corynantheine, corynoxine, daucosterol, epicatechin, harman, hirsuteine, hirsutine, iso-pteropodine, loganic acid, lyaloside, mitraphylline, oleanolic acid, palmitoleic acid, procyanidins, pteropodine quinovic acid glycosides, rhynchophylline, rutin, sitosterols, speciophylline, stigmasterol, strictosidines, uncarines, and vaccenic acid.,

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