



## HERBS AS REWARDING COMPANIONS MATERIA MEDICA BY CASCADE ANDERSON GELLER

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**SLIPPERY ELM** *Ulmus rubra* (formerly *U. fulva*) family Elm Ulmaceae synonyms: sweet elm

**Constituents:** Mucilage (methyl-galactose), tannins, calcium oxalate, starch, organic acids: ulmic acid, capric acid, salicylic acid (trace); phytosterols; sesquiterpenes, flavonoids

**Habitat:** US and Canadian deciduous woodlands (especially partial to hickory/oak forests) west to Texas, south to Florida, and north to Quebec up to elevations of 600 m (2000') (other species of elms found world-wide.) Most have mucilaginous parts. Elm wood has been a very useful wood for numerous wood-working projects from railroad ties to buildings. Some concern for overharvesting, though reliable sources in the Eastern forest lands say that it is a prolific seeder and very common. Older trees subject to Dutch elm disease.

**Parts Used:** Inner bark harvested in the spring. Ingredient in Essiac formula. Now available in powdered (gruel), cut (tea) and occasionally whole inner bark quills. Useful for any problem having to do with the mucous membranes including respiratory, gastro-intestinal and genito-urinary especially if there is inflammation or irritation. Specifically soothing and demulcent for dry throats and coughs, burning urination, ulcers, colitis, diarrhea, constipation. Good corrective herb for drying or irritating herbs like *Usnea*, *Berberis*, *Hydrastis*, or *Arctostaphylos uva ursi*. Nutritive when eaten, especially by individuals with poor digestion or prolonged convalescence. Topically helpful for abscesses, burns, irritated rashes, slow-healing wounds. Great skin and hair emollient without adding oil. Put thin tea on after bathing or shampooing. Don't rinse off.

**Preparations:** Gruel or pudding or decoction: powdered inner bark 1 tsp - 1 TBS stirred into 1 cup cold water or juice (pear juice adds to the demulcent effects) and simmer for 2 minutes stirring constantly. May be sweetened or flavored with vanilla or cinnamon. May be taken ad lib. The powdered herb may also be added to morning cereal grains before cooking (1 tsp or so per cup of cereal). Mixed 1/2 and 1/2 (1 tsp each) with licorice powder and add to water to desirable texture. Can be eaten for gastric ulcer.

**Contraindications:** listed as an abortifacient because of its previous use as a mechanical cervical dilator before laminaria seaweed.

### **Slippery Elm Gruel Recipe:**

This is one of the most soothing beverages for throat, respiratory tract, gut, urinary tract and other ailments of the mucous membrane.

Stir one heaping teaspoon of slippery elm bark powder into eight to ten ounces of cold water, or for better taste, pear or apple juice (pear is more mucilaginous). Stir until smooth and then gently heat until it starts to simmer, stirring continuously. Remove from heat and enjoy warm or cool as a soothing beverage.

For a more pudding-like texture, use a larger amount of slippery elm bark powder. Can add raisins or other dried fruit.