

Echinacea

Botanical: *Echinacea angustifolia* (DE CANDOLLE)

Family: N.O. Compositae

Synonyms

Black Sampson. Coneflower. Niggerhead. Rudbeckia. *Brauneria pallida* (Nutt.).

Parts Used

Root, dried; also rhizome.

Habitat

America, west of Ohio, and cultivated in Britain.

Description

Named *Echinacea* by Linnaeus, and *Rudbeckia*, after Rudbeck, father and son, who were his predecessors at Upsala.

The flowers are a rich purple and the florets are seated round a high cone; seeds, four-sided achenes. Root tapering, cylindrical, entire, slightly spiral, longitudinally furrowed; fracture short, fibrous; bark thin; wood, thick, in alternate porous, yellowish and black transverse wedges, and the rhizome has a circular pith. It has a faint aromatic smell, with a sweetish taste, leaving a tingling sensation in the mouth not unlike *Aconitum napellus*, but without its lasting numbing effect.

Constituents

Oil and resin both in wood and bark and masses of inulin, inuloid, sucrose, vulose, betaine, two phytosterols and fatty acids, oleic, cerotic, linolic and palmatic.

Medicinal Action and Uses

Echinacea increases bodily resistance to infection and is used for boils, erysipelas, septicaemia, cancer, syphilis and other impurities of the blood, its action being antiseptic. It has also useful properties as a strong alterative and aphrodisiac. As an injection, the extract has been used for haemorrhoids and a tincture of the *fresh* root has been found beneficial in diphtheria and putrid fevers.

Other Species

Echinacea purpurea has similar properties to *E. angustifolia*; the *fresh* root of this is the part used.