

# ECHINACEA

**COMMON NAME:** PURPLE CONE FLOWER, BLACK SAMPSON

**LATIN NAME:** *Echinacea purpurea*, *E augustifolia*, *E pallida*

**FAMILY** *Compositae*

**HISTORY:** Commonly used by American Native people for a wide range of illnesses, including burns, wounds, abscesses, insect bites, infections, toothache, joint pain and also snake bite. In particular the plains tribes regarded *e. augustifolia* as a cure-all, and it was listed in the U.S. national formulary from 1916 to 1950. These three species have similar constituents and are used interchangeable. *E purpurea* is now considered the most effective detoxicant in Western medicine for the circulatory, respiratory and lymphatic systems and has been adopted by Ayurvedic practitioners. The name comes from the Greek “echinos” which means hedge hog and refers to the prickly scales of the flowers central cone.

**BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION:** *Echinacea purpurea* is a tall rhizomatous perennial with ovate-lancelot leaves. Purple honey scented daisylike flowers with conical orange-brown centres are produced in summer and early autumn. The other two varieties mentioned *Echinacea augustifolia* is 0.6m tall and *E pallida* is usually 0.3-0.9 m tall and has white pollen and a paler flower.

**TYPE:** PERENNIAL    **HEIGHT:** 0.5-1.5 M    **SPREAD:** 45CM    **HARDINESS ZONES:** 3-10

**HABITAT:** Native to Mid Western North America, cultivated in Europe and naturalized or cultivated over most of North America. Prefers rich, well drained soil in full sun.

**PROPAGATION:** By seed sown in spring or by root cuttings in late winter and by division when dormant. *Echinacea augustifolia* and *pallida* are very difficult to germinate from seed and usually needs cold period of 30-90 days and possible pretreatment with ethrel, expected germination rates for these two species is generally less than 40%.

**PARTS USED:** All parts can be used but it is the root/rhizomes that are considered the most potent.

**HARVEST:** Unearth roots in fall and use fresh for extraction.

**CONSTITUENTS:** Both water and fat soluble components are needed for maximum effect.

- polysaccharides-significant immune enhancing properties
- flavonoids-in leaves and stems
- caffeic acid derivatives-mainly in roots
- essential oil-small amount
- polyacetylenes
- alkylamides-tingling of tongue, mildly anesthetic
- other chemical-alkaloids, resins, glycoproteins, sterols,
- minerals and fatty acids.

**PROPERTIES:** A bitter, slightly aromatic, alterative herb that stimulates the immune system, promotes healing (vulnerary), and has antiviral and antibacterial properties.

**INDICATIONS:** infections-colds, flu, upper respiratory tract infections, uro-genital infections particularly candidiasis

snake bite-inhibits hyaluronidase

wound healing-anti-inflammatory and vulnerary for burns, abscesses, wounds, eczema, herpes, varicose ulcers

arthritis-for its anti-inflammatory effects

allergies-used as a tonic for food allergies, environmental sensitivities, hay fever and any other allergy not related to long-term immune deficiency.

cancer-with or without chemotherapy, as it raises levels of white blood cells

**DOSAGE:** DECOCTION 1/2-1 tsp. /cup water, take 1 cup tid.  
TINCTURE- 2-4 ML t.i.d. OR MORE

Here is a table of the “Suggested Dose Schedule” from “Echinacea- The Immune Herb” by Christopher Hobbs (June 1996) Note\* Capsules and Tablets refer to dry root preparations.

<u>TYPE OF DOSE</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>DURATION</u>
Tonic Dose	10 drops/day of tincture 2 capsules/day 1 tablet/day	up to 9 months, as needed
Maintenance Dose	20 drops 2x/day 2 capsules 2x/day 1 tablet 2x/day	up to 2 months
Protective Dose	1 dropperful 2-3x/day 2 capsules 3-4x/day 2 tablets 2x/day	10 days on, 4 days off for up to 3 cycles
Full Course	1-2 dropperfull every 2 hrs 3-4 capsules every 2 hrs 1-2 tablets every 2 hrs	10 days maximum, then use protective dose
Childrens Dose	under 6:10drop max/dose 7-10:20 drops max/dose 11-13:30 drops max/dose 14-16: 1 dropperfull max/dose	same as above depending on severity of the condition

Christoper Hobbs recommends the following types of doses for these conditions:

Rhematoid Arthritis-Tonic Dose for anti-inflammatory effect along with one feverfew tablet every day.  
Allergies-Tonic Dose can be used along with Goldenseal and Eyebright  
Toothaches and mouth and gum infections-Gargle and swish extract, then swallow; apply full strength to the infected area 3-5 times daily; may add propolis or myrrh liquid extract.  
Bites and stings-apply full strength on the bite and take internally  
Blood and Food Poisoning-take large doses internally(1-4 dropperfull or 4 capsules every 2 hours)  
Boils, carbuncles,abscesses-apply externally and take full course internally  
Eczema-use maintenance dose internally; may use Viola tricolour liquid extract.

**COMBINATIONS:** This herb works well combined with many others depending on the effects desired.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS/WARNINGS:** *Conflicting reports of appropriateness in HIV and AIDS because of stimulation of T cell replication and tumor necrosis factor (TNF) may support virus replication.*

\*MAKE SURE YOU HAVE GENUINE ECHINACEA- EITHER *Echinacea purpurea* or *augustifolia* OR A MIXTURE IS SATISFACTORY. -MANY ADULTERANTS USED IN SOME COMMERCIAL PREPARATION.