

Treating Herpes Naturally with *Larrea tridentata*

An Effective, Natural remedy for Cold sores, Genital herpes, Shingles, Chickenpox, Epstein-Barr, and other herpes outbreaks.

W. Dennis Clark, Ph.D.



NOTICE

The purpose of this book is to increase your knowledge about a natural remedy for herpes. It is not intended as medical advice and it is not meant to diagnose or treat any individual's health problems. You should not discontinue any course of medical treatment or undertake any new treatment without first consulting your own healthcare practitioner.

TREATING HERPES NATURALLY WITH *LARREA TRIDENTATA*

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PROLOGUE

My journey into medical botany began when, as a young university professor, I found that my knowledge of plant chemistry could be used to explain how plant natural products affect human health. At first I sought to learn which botanicals were best for enhancing my health and for preventing and treating my own illnesses and those of my family. I soon found that my friends and students wanted the same kind of information. At their behest, I broadened my efforts to seek natural medicines for preventing or treating many human disorders, including cold sores, arthritis, periodontal disease, osteoporosis, cancer, psoriasis, stress, and headaches. My research team and I have now found wonderful natural treatments for many health problems, which work better, cost less, and have fewer side effects than common prescription drugs.

I feel blessed to have a background that enables me to evaluate both the scientific literature and the popular press on natural medicines and to dig out, understand, and explain to the public how and why these medicines work. And I feel especially fortunate to have a research laboratory, where I can examine different botanical products and use this information to advise people on the best choices for their own health.

People should be able to get straightforward answers to such simple questions as, *“Which natural medicines will work for me?”* and *“What commercial brands are reliable for what I need?”* But these answers are not easy to find for people who do not have extensive scientific training and sophisticated laboratory facilities. My role is to provide this service, to bring the best research available on medicinal plants to the public’s attention and to lead the way in the evaluation and development of quality products.

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PREFACE

“What is most likely to be effective but safe for me?”

C ontemporary society has developed an increasing interest in natural medicine, an interest that accelerated throughout the 1990s and has continued to do so into the 21st century. This renewed interest comes in response to the crisis in our health-care system: as a nation we pay more for our medical care and accomplish less than most other nations of comparable living standards, while health care costs continue to spiral out of control. We are bankrupting our economy by spending nearly a trillion dollars a year on medical treatments that are often inappropriate, ineffective, and unnecessarily dangerous. In spite of this high-cost trend, medical science has yet to discover the critical underlying causes or the appropriate and effective treatments for any of the major human diseases, including cancer, AIDS, heart disease, herpes, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, arthritis, and osteoporosis. These failures of modern medicine have given our collective memory a jolt to recall folk remedies that were once widely and successfully used for all sorts of human disorders. Such rediscovered folk medicines have now been evaluated in thousands of clinical and other scientific studies. One such rediscovery, the topic of this book, is the desert shrub *Larrea tridentata*, which has a long folk history in the treatment of many diseases. The following pages provide valuable information about this plant and its importance as a natural remedy for one of the most common and vexing sets of diseases that can afflict people: the group of diseases caused by herpes viruses.

Not a week goes by without several magazines, scientific journals, and newsletters adding to the information overload about natural medicine. The outpouring cannot be ignored. By now everyone from doctors to patients and from insurance companies to the drug industry knows about this growing phenomenon. It is ironic, however, that the older, natural treatments are now referred to as ‘*alternative*’ or ‘*complementary*’ medicine, whereas the recent inventions of modern medicine constitute the mainstream. This situation presents the end-user (you, me, and every other individual seeking good health) with a contrast of choices. On one hand, mainstream medicine is extremely highly regulated as to who can train the physicians, who is

allowed to practice medicine, which treatments are approved for research and clinical use, which companies can own treatments (that is, patented drugs and devices), and who is allowed to make and sell the approved products. On the other hand, alternative medicine, to say the least, is much less regulated in all comparable areas. Training varies in quality and quantity for all manner of physicians, some states grant licenses for certain types of practitioners and not others, natural drugs can be prescribed by professionals but not labeled as medicines in retail stores, and treatments must slither around under the guise of nutritional supplements and be regulated more or less as foods.

Okay, so how are you going to decide on a treatment discipline and choose from the protocols that are available within it? You can be like a friend of mine who informed me that she didn't believe in natural medicines (to which I responded that I hadn't heard that this was a religious faith). Or you can be like many of my students in plant biology who claim that natural products are better for you because they are natural (at which point I am always delighted to tell them that strychnine, coniine [from poison hemlock], nicotine, and cocaine are all natural products, too). All disciplines have something good to offer, so your personal assignment is really quite simple: answer the question, "*What is most likely to be effective but safe for me?*" Initially, your answer has to be based on the prior evidence that evaluates a treatment. This means that you will have to become a bit of a scientist (this isn't so bad - I enjoy being one!) so you can obtain, read, and evaluate published materials before making your decision. This is where I come in, unless you already have access to a university library and the skills for finding and evaluating scientific literature. And this is where this book fills a niche for you, by presenting the information you need for evaluating and deciding on a certain treatment protocol for certain medical problems caused by herpes viruses.

Before moving on, I'd like you to ask the following question of me (because I'm going to answer it anyway): Why I am writing about THIS particular treatment for THIS particular medical problem? I have many reasons: 1) my professional and personal bias toward natural medicine; 2) my fascination with a plant species that I have seen almost everywhere in the desert southwest and adjacent Mexico; 3) my work for the past 30 years with the types of chemicals that this plant species produces in abundance; 4) the continuing discoveries of the antiviral properties of these kinds of plant chemicals; 5) the serendipitous personal discovery a few years ago by a friend of a friend that an extract from this plant made her cold sores go away very quickly.

Speaking of friends, several of mine have reviewed this book and have tried mightily to keep me from making it too technical. But I love plant biology and chemistry, and I know a lot about it and feel compelled to share as much of it as I can with anyone who will listen or read about it. So this book represents an uneasy truce between their recommendations for something that is not too detailed and my desire to expound on the science that is near and dear to me. I think that all of the information in this book is important for everyone, and I think that I have made it understandable to non-scientists and scientists alike.

What you will find in this book is information about an excellent natural treatment for herpes outbreaks. There are other very good treatments, some of which are also from natural sources and some of which are synthetic and available by prescription only. And there are plenty of bad treatments. My purpose is to provide you with enough information about one treatment so you can compare it with information about others and make a well-informed decision regarding your own health. May all of your healthcare decisions be well-informed ones.



INTRODUCTION

“Nearly everyone will be affected by some type of herpes virus at some time in his or her life.”

This book describes a powerful natural remedy for herpes infections, which comes from a common desert shrub that goes by the official name, *Larrea tridentata*, and the common name, creosote bush. *Larrea* has an extensive folk medical history among Native Americans and has attracted a great deal of interest from medical researchers over the past four decades because of its past uses in several kinds of human disorders, including chickenpox, digestive disorders, sores, inflammation, rheumatism, venereal disease, influenza, bronchitis, and the common cold. The connection between this list and herpes is evident from the folk use of *Larrea* against chickenpox, which is caused by a herpes virus. The use of *Larrea* against influenza and the common cold suggests that this plant has broader antiviral effects than just against herpes, a notion that is now supported by several recent scientific studies.

Herpes viruses inflict widespread suffering around the world. Nearly everyone will be affected by some type of herpes virus at some time in his or her life. Depending on the individual, some infections will be minimal and some will be drastic, even fatal. And depending on the particular type of herpes virus, the resulting disorder could be oral sores, genital sores, chickenpox, shingles, Kaposi’s sarcoma, and Epstein-Barr syndrome, to name only the most commonly known afflictions caused by this family of viruses.

The more that people know about herpes viruses the better off they are when it comes to preventing or reducing outbreaks or treating full-blown cases. Many, many books and articles have been published on this topic, some of which I list in the bibliography at the end of this book. In addition, this book provides some of the most important and basic information that I think everyone should know about viruses in general and herpes viruses in particular. The coverage of viruses is followed by details that you should know about the most commonly used prescription drug for treating herpes. This information is intended as a valuable addition to your personal health arsenal.



The most important question in your mind is probably, “*How do I know that Larrea works?*” After the sections about herpes and other viruses, you will find the information you need to answer this question. First you will see why *Larrea* is such a remarkable medicinal plant, followed by an explanation of the scientific basis for its use in treating herpes infections and the current medical evidence for its effectiveness.

You will also find a brief section containing directions on where to locate other sources of information about herpes, including telephone numbers, websites, and printed materials, (Appendix A), an explanation of the nettlesome but crucial issue of plant names in medical botany (Appendix B), an extensive list of Native American medical uses of *Larrea* (Appendix C), and a summary of recent U.S. patents that have been granted for the use of *Larrea* in human health (Appendix D).

Scientists such as myself feel obliged to give official credit (or blame) where it is due. This means that we are in the habit of providing a bibliography of the published resources used for background material. In keeping with this tradition (which I believe to be a necessity), I have listed examples from different kinds of resources based on what I think are the most important and most useful sources of further information for you about herpes and about *Larrea*. The list is not complete, but it is representative. Indeed, a complete literature review of herpes would require the evaluation of 3,200 articles that have been published since 1988, and more than 40 books, the first of which came out in 1967.

Now I invite you to read on and find out how *Larrea* can help you and why I am so enthusiastic about this extraordinary plant as a natural medicine that everybody should know about.