

## Echinacea, aka Purple cone flower How to harness the power of magical herbs right from your garden.

Echinacea grows as a perennial, plant it once and it not only comes back each year but most years it also multiplies. And it attracts pollinators — especially bees.

Echinacea is useful for many home remedies — it has been known for hundreds of years in alternative therapies but recently has been studied by science.

Historically it has been used as an anti-microbial to help fight infection — all kinds of infections including bacterial and viral. Some of the infections it has been tested against include: UTIs, yeast infections, herpes, gum disease, tonsillitis, strep, malaria, and Dyptheria — used topically or internally.



It has also been used in ancient times for snake bites (poisonous), spider bites (including brown recluse), bee stings, and ticks. I would use the extract topically for these applications. (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3388772/>) This long study has states this: Antivenin activity

There is huge repository of medicinal plants used for treating snake bites [Table 4]. Many plants have been conserved and used as antidotes for snake envenomations.[60] Increase in survival rates of rats has been observed with *Casearia sylvestris* extract.[16] . Different species of *Echinacea* are used in North America for treating snake bites.[61] The plant contains echinacoside, cichoric acid, ketoalkenes, alkyl amides and polysaccharides.[62] Anisodamine, an alkaloid isolated from *Anisodus tanguticus* with the chemical structure and pharmacological action similar to atropine and scopolamine, has been proposed to be an effective drug for snake bites.[63]

I did find this study indicating “chemical analysis of plant extracts identified catequines, flavones, anthocyanines and condensated tannins, which may be responsible for the inhibitory effect observed, probably owing to the chelation of the zinc required for the catalytic activity of venom's hemorrhagic metalloproteinases.” (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/variety-tropical-plant-extracts-inhibit-hemorrhagic-activity-induced-venom> )

It has been used by Native Americans to soothe coughs and sore throats . ((<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinaceasage-least-effective-chlorhexidinelidocaine-treating-acute-sore-throats> ) . Some recent studies have shown boots our immune system and is effective in shortening or preventing colds — but to be most effective here it needs to be used BEFORE you get sick. This means daily teas and use in food.

You will notice when you use herbs regularly, over time, that you get sick less — you know the flu goes around and a lot of people get it . . . but not you. This is true when you use herbs for food, teas, diffuse essential oils or use them topically.

### How to use echinacea:



**From your garden** : All summer long while blooming collect flower tops and some of the top leaves that have not browned. You can use some fresh and dry some for use year round. **To use as a tea** boil the flower and leaves for about 15 minutes, add some honey -- but wait until the tea is drinkable temperature before adding the honey -- water hotter than body temperature can kill some of the beneficial enzymes of honey.

You can also use the roots, they are more powerful than the leaves and flowers, but if you dig up too many roots the plant will start to diminish or die -- you dig up some roots but not all to keep the plant alive, and many people do that if the plant gets too big. I would save use of the root for acute use such as a flu. Most times we don't need heroic doses to reap benefits:)

**From extracts or tinctures** -- I use the tincture topically or internally. I would use it topically for to enhance skin, or for spider bites or bee stings. I also use the tincture in teas while I am traveling. I have not yet experimented with making my own extracts or tinctures but it is on my list. I have a friend in Maui who makes his own tinctures (JP at rancho relaxo in Ulupalakua <http://ranchorelaxzo.com> ) and I buy his.

Any health food store will also have tinctures, pills, teas, and powders of echinacea you can buy and use. I would be cautious with supplements -- usually sources are cheaper or fillers are added, dosages could be too high, and many supplements are not the whole part ground up -- using the whole plant or plant part is more beneficial as it protects us against side effects that could come from extracting what we think is medicinal and taking it out of proportion of the whole plant while leaving other beneficial plant parts behind -- and the whole part is usually easier to digest because there are enzymes in the whole plant that can help with digestion.

A nice tea concoction of herbs that are easy to grow in your own garden is a trio of echinacea, mint, and lemongrass. After boiling the echinacea for 15 minutes, I take the hot echinacea tea and pour it over the lemongrass and mint. Steep about 15 minutes, add some honey if you like, and enjoy.

A note here, it is good to mix up the herbs you use -- I dry herbs from my garden all winter long for use. I use echinacea most when the blooms start, in the winter I used my dried echinacea once or twice per week, rotating each night what kind of tea I make. In this way I am always rotating through different medicinal herbs for the most benefit.

Since echinacea is an immune booster it is most effective preventatively! This means don't wait until you are coming down with a cold or the flu to start sipping some tea. Use herbs daily in both cooking and teas or infused waters. This is fun all summer long when you have lots of herbs in your garden to experiment with.

Over time you will notice that you rarely get sick :) ☀️

And here is some interesting additional uses I found plenty of data on its efficacy on:

- ☪️ **Can protect from ionizing radiation exposure** -- this is an important study as it was done on humans who work with ionizing radiation. The tests showed people taking echinacea extract via pills increased white blood cell count while it helped damaged cells die (apoptosis). White blood cells are your immune system, this is one of the reasons echinacea boosts immune system function. (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-may-protect-against-radiation-induced-adverse-health-effects>). ( <http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-has-radioprotective-properties> )

- 33 **Good for your skin**, echinacea improves skin hydration and reduces wrinkles by preventing oxidation. An extract in a cream or gel was used here, but I would mix some extract in with some of my oils to use on my skin. (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-improves-skin-dermatological-application>)
- 33 Another study showing echinacea protects your skin against UVA & UVB radiation exposure. ( <http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-may-prevent-and-treat-photodamage-skin-uva-uvb-radiation>)
- 33 Can help protect against side effects from chemotherapy (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/polysaccharides-isolated-echinacea-purpurea-herba-cell-cultures-counteract-undesired-effects>)
- 33 **Can treat sore throats** -- a spray with echinacea and sage was used in this study -- they sprayed the throats of children with throat pain two sprays each hour. This study was tested against lidocaine and it found echinacea spray to be slightly more effective without any side effects. (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinaceasage-least-effective-chlorhexidinelidocaine-treating-acute-sore-throats>)
- 33 **Can treat ear infections** and reduce anti-biotic use -- a tincture was used for this study. (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/proprietary-plant-based-and-homeopathic-remedy-superior-conventional-treatment>)
- 33 **Can prevent upper respiratory tract infections** (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-appears-effective-preventing-upper-respiratory-tract-infections-children> )
- 33 Safety tested for children and adults. ( <http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-preparations-are-well-tolerated-herbal-medicines-management-children> )
- 33 May help with type 1 diabetes by increasing NK cells which tend to be deficient in people with type 1 diabetes (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/dietary-consumption-echinacea-mice-afflicted-autoimmune-type-1-diabetes-results-long-lasting> )
- 33 This study suggests the flowers contain compounds with potential to help manage type 2 diabetes by increasing insulin-stimulated glucose uptake. (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-purpurea-contain-compounds-therapeutic-potential-insulin-resistance-and-type-2>)
- 33 Prevention and treatment of common cold (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/meta-analysis-based-sixteen-trials-reveals-majority-studies-report-positive-results> ) (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-effective-prevention-symptoms-rhinovirus-induced-common-cold>) (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/proprietary-extract-echinacea-plant-echinacea-purpurea-enhances-systemic>)
- 33 Combats Flu (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-purpurea-extracts-have-potential-use-alleviating-symptoms-and-pathology-associated>)
- 33 It boosts your immune system and anti-oxidants (<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-enhances-innate-and-adaptive-immune-functions> <http://www.greenmedinfo.com/article/echinacea-exhibits-antioxidant-and-immune-enhancing-properties>)

Translation of the sign: Magical Herbs. Taken in a little town outside Ceske Budjovice, Czech Republic.

