5 Herbs for Psoriasis

by PATRICIA BRATIANU

Herbal Remedies for Psoriasis

There are many herbal remedies used to treat psoriasis, some used internally and some used externally with good results. Let’s take a look at some familiar – and some less common – herbs used to relieve itching, soften skin, and reduce scaly patches associated with psoriasis.

1. Samambaia (South American Fern)

Unless you are from South America, Central America, or the Caribbean, you may be unfamiliar with samambaia, also known as calaguala. Samambaia is one of the best herbs available on the entire planet for treating psoriasis. The herb is used to make a prescription drug that is used to treat psoriasis.

Samambaia has historically been used by herbalists as a “blood cleanser.” Today, most people would say that the herb enhances detoxification of the body. Samambaia is used internally as well as topically.

The skin is the largest organ of detoxification, so samambaia is especially important for skin health. Compounds in samambaia protect the skin from sunburn, autoimmune reactions, and damage due to skin conditions including psoriasis, dermatitis, ulcers, and boils. The potent antioxidants in samambaia prevent and reverse the effects of aging on skin tissues. It relieves pain and restores balance to the immune system.

Compounds in the blood cause psoriatic plaques to form, and samambaia deactivates the plaque stimulating compounds; preventing and reducing their plaque formation. Like most herbal remedies, samambaia takes several months to become fully effective. Fortunately, once samambaia and other herbs are taken consistently, their positive effects are generally longstanding.

You may purchase samambaia commercially in the form of tinctures, capsules, or tablets. It is not readily available in most locales so you may have to purchase the herb online or from an herbalist. An equivalent of one or two grams of the herb is consumed twice each day. If taking an extract, follow the label instructions.

You may purchase the dried herb in order to save money. Samambaia is easily prepared as a cold infusion. Simply pour two cups of water over two teaspoonsful of dried leaves or roots, also called rhizomes. Place a lid on the container. Let it sit, undisturbed, overnight. In the morning, strain out the herb. Drink one cup of tea twice daily. Apply the tea topically to skin lesions two to four times daily.

2. Kudzu

Kudzu is a vine from Asia. In North America, Kudzu was introduced as a non-native plant years ago. With no natural enemies, it vigorously flourished and became known as the “vine that ate the south.” While Americans generally think of kudzu as a noxious weed, it is actually a nutritious plant that has been used for thousands of years as a medicine.

Kudzu contains a wide array of healing compounds. Its anti-inflammatory properties reduce flare-ups of psoriasis. Kudzu may be consumed as a food or as a tea.

To make kudzu tea, simmer four teaspoons of dried, or four tablespoons of fresh, kudzu root in one quart of water for 20 minutes. Keep a cover on the pot. Strain out the plant parts and drink one quart of tea daily. The dried root may be powdered and made into capsules or tablets if you prefer.

Next page: benefits of sarsparilla and burdock root.

3. Sarsaparilla

You may know sarsaparilla as the traditional root used to make root beer. This flavorful root is another herb traditionally classified as a “blood cleanser.” Like samambaia, it interferes with the body’s autoimmune response that is responsible for the development of psoriatic plaques.

Compounds in sarsaparilla bind with harmful compounds in your system called endotoxins. The endotoxins are harmlessly eliminated from your body instead of causing the autoimmune response and plaques.

Many people do not consider the health of the liver when thinking about psoriasis. But other than the skin, the liver is the other major detoxifier of the body. Sarsaparilla protects the liver, thereby eliminating toxins effectively through the entire system.

This systemic detoxification effect improves the health of the whole body and alleviates pressure on the skin to rid the body of toxins. This affords the body with an opportunity to use its energy to prevent and heal psoriatic lesions.

In addition to relieving psoriasis, sarsaparilla is used for the treatment of eczema and acne. It decreases inflammation and discomfort and is rich in flavonoids, which protect the entire body.

Sarsaparilla root is readily available commercially in the forms of capsules, extracts, and tablets. Follow label instructions for extracts. Take the equivalent of one to two grams of the capsules or tablets each day. The bulk herb is inexpensive and easy to obtain from herbalists online or at health food stores.

To prepare Sarsaparilla root as a decoction, follow the instructions given above for kudzu. Drink half a cup to one cup of the sarsaparilla decoction two or three times daily. The decoction is best consumed while it is warm. You may also use the decoction topically by applying it directly to lesions two to three times daily.

4. Burdock Root

Burdock is a classic herb to use as a remedy for psoriasis. It’s inexpensive, easy to find, and palatable. Burdock is classified as an alterative herb. It is a nutritious, detoxifying herb which is outstanding for long-term use. Burdock improves the health of your entire body by gently but deeply cleansing and toning all of the tissues – it soothes your skin from the inside out.

It also provides healthy carbohydrates and minerals which your skin needs to promote healing and decrease inflammation. In addition to healing psoriasis, burdock reduces acne flare-ups, boil formation, and canker sore development, as well as relievinh skin and joint discomfort.

The Japanese vegetable called gobo is burdock root. It can be consumed in cooked in dishes like other root vegetables. However, for maximum effect, consume burdock in tea, tablet, extract, or capsule form so that you will be sure that you obtain it in adequate amounts.

Follow package instructions on commercial products. Use the kudzu recipe above to prepare a burdock decoction and drink 3-4 cups of burdock tea daily. If you find that you are having loose or frequent bowel movements,

decrease the amount of tea that you drink each day.

Next page: the benefits of soothing chickweed, plus a recipe for chickweed oil to try.

5. Soothing Chickweed

Chickweed is a wild plant that frequently grows on lawns in temperate climates. It is easy to grow in a garden or pot. Chickweed is not fussy, but grows best in partial sun with rich soil.

The easiest way to consume chickweed is to grow it and toss its fleshy vitamin and mineral-rich leaves in a salad. If at all possible, it should be used fresh for herbal preparations. If fresh chickweed is unavailable, I suggest buying it freeze-dried.

Chickweed works very well internally, however, where it really excels is a topical remedy for psoriasis and other skin problems. It's mucilaginous leaves cool, soothe, and protect the skin. Chickweed reduces cracking, scaling, redness, inflammation, and itchiness.

Here is a simple recipe for a topical chickweed oil:

- Crush fresh chickweed leaves.
- Place them in a sterilized jar.
- Cover the leaves with evening primrose oil.
- The amount of oil to use depends upon the volume of chickweed you have. Be sure to cover the leaves completely.
- Place a cover on the jar and shake the oil blend each day. Make sure that the chickweed remains completely submerged, adding extra oil if necessary.
- After two weeks, strain out the chickweed. Apply the oil to lesions two to three times each day.

Unlike most other herbal remedies, this herbal oil works quickly.

Conclusion

Herbal remedies are safe and effective options to use for psoriasis. They heal, nourish, provide comfort and improve the appearance of your skin.

Generally speaking, they take time to work, but given a chance, herbal remedies provide lasting healing effects.