

Dragon's Blood

Croton Lechleri



Dragon's Blood (*Croton Lechleri*) is a reddish latex which exudes from the bark of a tree native to the Amazon region. It belongs to the *Euphorbaceae* family. Traditionally this latex has been used from time immemorial by native Amazonian peoples to treat a wide range of complaints.

The name dragon's blood dates from the time of the arrival of the Spaniards who studied and classified the local flora and fauna. The reddish resin reminded them of a similar resin called "*sanguis draconis*" produced by some Old World trees.

Antiviral & Antibacterial

Numerous studies of dragon's blood have shown it to be highly effective as an antiviral agent, particularly against herpes, hepatitis A & B and the influenza A virus.

Healing Properties

One of the main uses of dragon's blood is as a wound healing agent. For both internal and external wounds. The indigenous people of Peru have used the resin to heal skin wounds and ulcers. Studies carried out on mice at the Faculty of Biological Sciences of the Cayetano Heredia University in Lima determined that the principal active ingredient was the alkaloid taspina. In 1980 Vaisberg *et al* showed that the healing effect was produced because the taspina stimulated cell migration to the site of the injury.

In vitro tests show that dragon's blood causes the wound to contract thus helping to form a scab and rapid regeneration of the skin. It also stimulates the formation of collagen and, as is usually the case, it has been shown that the synergistic effect of the full latex is greater than that of isolated compounds.

The use of dragon's blood in zoopharmaocognosy is similar to its use in humans. We have noticed that when it is rubbed on the skin there is a "soapy" effect. One person has noted that it produced a burning effect when applied to the skin but I have not seen this either on myself or on animals.

General Information

Dragon's blood is:

- Non-toxic
- Non-irritating
- Does not sensitise the skin

Precautions

- As dragon's blood contains phenols it is not recommended for cats.
- Dragon's blood stains the skin.