

Withania somnifera



ASHWAGANDHA
WINTER CHERRY
POISON GOOSEBERRY



Withania somnifera



- Powerful herb used in Ayurveda healing for 4,000 years
- Restorative and rejuvenating plant
- Known to be an astringent, sedative, aphrodisiac, antibiotic, antiviral and diuretic.
- Commonly known as Ashwagandha, but also called Indian Ginseng, Poison Gooseberry, and Winter Cherry

Morphology



- Plump shrub with oval leaves, yellow/green flowers, and small red fruit
- 35-75 cm tall
- Long tuberous roots
- Small red berries green calyx
- Hermaphrodite yellow flowers
- Alternate, oval leaves
- Central stem with supporting stems
- Covered in silver-gray hairs



Cultivation



- Likes basic soils with good drainage
- 500-750 mm rainfall
- Altitudes of 600-1200 m
- Optimal temperature 20-32 degrees C
- Perennial shrub
- Flowers year long
- Doesn't grow in shade



Medicinal



- Typically ingested in capsule form, also can be powdered
- 600-1,000 mg twice daily recommended
- Alleviates stress, fatigue, lack of energy, difficulty concentrating
- Protects immune system, improves memory, learning, and reaction time, reduces anxiety and depression, enhances sexual potency
- Protects nervous system and brain cells and has cancer fighting effects- slows tumor growth



How?



- Leaves and fruit are valuable, however the root is most commonly used.
- Referred to as an adaptogenic herb
- Contains withanolides (steroidal lactones), alkaloids, choline, fatty acids, amino acids, and many different kinds of sugars.
- Sometimes, the berries and leaves are applied externally to tumors, ulcers, and glands.

History



- Native to dry regions of India, Northern Africa, and the Middle East
- Now grown in many places, including the United States
- Very new plant to modern culture

Fun Facts



- Described in sacred texts of Ayurveda 4,000 years ago
- Means “smell of a horse” in Sanskrit, meaning it has the strength of a stallion and the root smells like a wet horse.
- Can be used as a substitute for "rennet" which is a complex of enzymes used when making cheese
- Insect repellant
- Soap substitute from saponin in the fruit
- Somnifera: sleep-bearing
- Lion repellant

Works Cited



- www.chopra.com/ccl/ashwaghandha
- [www.lef.org/magazine/2006/6/report ashwa/Page-01](http://www.lef.org/magazine/2006/6/report_ashwa/Page-01)
- <http://ashwagandha.co.in/aboutashwagandha.html>