

## **New Weapon Against Cold & Flu Season**

Although not yet one of the most common herbs or supplements, elderberry is gaining popularity among American herbalists as an excellent supplement to ward off colds and flus. Elderberry, which is a common, shrubby tree, produces creamy flowers in early summer, followed by deep wine-colored berries in the fall. Native Americans used the flowerwater for eye and skin lotions and the berries were common additives for jams, pies, teas, and later wines. Elderberry wine was quite common in Colonial America and the elderberry was nick-named the "country medicine chest" because of its varied uses. Today, elderberry is primarily recognized as providing support for the immune system.

Elderberry contains concentrated amounts of vitamin C, flavinoids, fruit acids, and anthocyanic pigments. It also is a good source for vitamins A and B. Recent studies have also indicated that elderberry may have antiviral activity, increasing its value as a preventative measure.

In addition, the Herbal Information Center reports that new evidence has found that elderberry has remarkable value in fighting flu and similar viruses. One benefit of elderberry is its ability to help break fevers as it promotes profuse sweating. These properties help make elderberry valuable as an "after the fact" supplement to speed the healing process.