Slippery Elm Bark Class
Slippery Elm

- *Ulmus rubra*, or more commonly known as the Slippery Elm, is a large tree within the family Ulmaceae. It can be known by many other names as well including Moose Elm, Soft Elm, Gray Elm, Indian Elm, and Red Elm. Slippery Elm is wanted mainly for its inner bark which has many medicinal benefits. The Slippery Elm is native to North America, where it can be found in Texas, Florida, Maine, and North Dakota. This tree can also be found in Canada in Quebec and Manitoba. The Slippery Elm has been used for its many benefits for centuries, the Native Americans used slippery elm in many healing salves to help reduce inflammation, relieve stomach problems, and many other ailments. Did you know that the yoke of the Liberty Bell was actually made with slippery elm?

- The *ulmus rubra* tree can grow up to a height of anywhere from 60 to 65 feet. Its' trunk can also grow to a width of 20 inches. The trunk of the tree is a reddish-brown color, which is where the name Red Elm can come from, and the actual bark is grayish-white in color. Its leaves grow in an asymmetrical shape, and are a light green color. They have a rough texture, double serrated edges, and usually grow up to around 4 to 6 inches in length. There are flower buds that will grow in clusters on the tips of the branches and are dark brown in color.

- Slippery Elm Bark can be used in many different products and industries. It can be used for medicinal purposes, bath and body products, skin care, hair care, soap making, and for culinary purposes. Common products it can be included in are soaps, face masks, salves, bath bombs, creams, ointments, lotions, facial toners, bath teas, hair products, and even natural toothpaste recipes. Did you know that Native Americans actually used soaked slippery elm bark as natural bandages?
Growing Conditions

• Like most trees and plants, the Slippery Elm has its own specific conditions needed in which to grow best. It prefers well drained but moist soils, however it can survive in areas with poor soil as well. It also prefers soils that contain loam or clay loam. It is most commonly found in areas of stream banks, river terraces, bottom lands, and lower slopes. It prefers areas with full sun exposure, but also grows well in just partial sun exposure.

• The Slippery Elm is considered to grow moderately fast and can actually live for over 200 years. It will take years for this tree to fully mature, however trees in Minnesota that were between the ages of 8 to 17 years old were shown to be about an inch in diameter. The actual roots of the tree will take at least a year after first being planted to be fully grown. The flowers of the tree will appear between February and May, before the leaves. The flowers will ripen from April to June, and then the seeds in the flowers will be dispersed with the wind.

• There are some pests and diseases that affect the slippery elm. It is more susceptible than other elm trees to a disease called Dutch elm disease spread by the European elm bark beetle and the native elm bark beetle. Wood borers and bark beetles can feed on the tree, and can cause the tree to stain and rot.
Uses in Industries

Food

- During famines, slippery elm is a great food to be able to store and serve. It can also be served as a porridge and given to small children and elderly people. Slippery Elm can also be given to children when mixed into dishes like applesauce, fruit juices, or even in cereals. When slippery elm is blended in fruit juice and mixed with hot milk and honey, you can actually make a chocolaty flavored drink.

Bath and Body Products

- Slippery Elm can be used for many different products and industries. Besides its culinary purposes, it can also be used for bath and body products, skin care, hair care, soap making, and medicinal purposes. When used in natural tooth paste recipes, slippery elm helps to relieve aching gums.

- Common bath and body products that can include slippery elm are salves, lotions, hair products, ointments, creams, facial toners, bath teas, soaps, face masks, and bath bombs.

- There are many wonderful skin care benefits to using slippery elm bark. It has emollient properties that help to make the skin feel soft and supple. It also helps to reduce redness, reduces swelling, promotes new cell growth, helps to fight the aging process, reduces swelling, and works to speed up the healing of wounds. Slippery Elm works to treat many skin conditions such as cold sores, psoriasis, and itchy or scaly skin.

- Your hair can greatly benefit from slippery elm as well. It works to improve the strength and volume of the hair and promotes healthy hair growth. It even works to remove dandruff, detangle the hair, makes the hair soft and smooth, and is great for treating dry, dull, and damaged hair.
Uses in Industries Cont.

Medicinal

- There are many wonderful medicinal benefits to the use of slippery elm bark. It contains many nutrients and vitamins that are extremely important to the body such as manganese, zinc, calcium, iodine, bromine, sugar, starch, amino acids, magnesium, iron, tannin, phosphorous, selenium, carotenes, and vitamins B1, B2, B3, and C.

- Native Americans used make a healing salve from slippery elm bark that was used to soothe, reduce, and heal inflammation, and to treat boils, wounds, ulcers, and burns.

- Slippery Elm is also one of the main ingredients in a tea called Essiac Tea. This tea can actually be used to treat and combat cancer.

- Warning to pregnant women: Slippery Elm Bark can cause premature birth. However, it can also be used as a lubricant to ease the pain of labor. Slippery Elm can also be used to treat conditions of the female organs, such as vaginal inflammation.

- This herb also works to treat dysentery, bowel diseases, urinary tract irritations, gastritis, diarrhea, colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, and even hemorrhoids.

- There are many more conditions that can be treated using slippery elm such as sore throats, colic, herpes, syphilis, coughing, diverticulitis, bladder infections, constipation, rheumatism, gout, Crohn’s disease, abscesses, and it can even expel tape worms.
Other Uses

• Slippery Elm bark can be used to make rope, chords, burial caskets, fence posts, furniture, and even to make drums and other musical instruments.

• Nature’s Garden sells slippery elm bark powder for external use only. We do not sell it as a food item. The information above talks about how great slippery elm bark is for many industries, however we only sell it for external use. We provide this data for educational purposes only. Nothing in this article is to be construed as medical advice. Please consult your doctor before using this product or any of this information for treatment purposes.

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