



# WILD CHERRY BARK

*Prunus serotina*



Part Utilized:  
Bark

## PROPERTIES:

Anti-inflammatory, Astringent, Sedative,  
Expectorant, Diuretic, Hemostatic

## SYSTEMS AFFECTED:

Respiratory, Urinary, Digestive, Nervous,  
Muscular

## POSSIBLE USES:

bronchitis, diarrhea, gout, pain, fever, sore  
throat

## INGREDIENT IN:

WC

## GENERAL INFORMATION:

The medicinal use of Wild Cherry Bark was first learned by the settlers from Native Americans throughout the US continent. Wild Cherry Bark was listed as an official medicine in The US Pharmacopeia from 1820 to as recently as 1970. However, there are arguments made that Wild Cherry Bark is toxic in large quantities due to its cyanogenic glycosides. It is stated that this constituent, following an enzymatic reaction, changes to its more toxic form, hydrogen cyanide. I simply do not know: I have never used Wild Cherry Bark except as a small part of a truly wonderful cough syrup formula. The Wild Cherry Bark is absolutely essential to this formula. We have never had a negative reaction of any kind to this formula, no matter how much of it we have taken—and we have taken a lot of it when the illness has been severe. Nor has the muscle test ever suggested a limit or that we use something else for a while.

The herbalist from whom I obtained the original WC formula told me—in no uncertain terms—that Wild Cherry Bark CANNOT be heated. I cannot find this information anywhere else but have made it without heating the Wild Cherry Bark as I was taught, just in case, and I use the herb as a tincture rather than as a warm tea.

In one preliminary study published in the journal Oncology Reports in 2006, scientists discovered that Wild Cherry Bark shows promise for protection against colorectal cancer. For the study, researchers tested the anti-cancer effects of Wild Cherry Bark and Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) in a series of laboratory experiments involving human colorectal cancer cells. Results revealed that both of these substances suppressed the growth of cancer cells and helped induce apoptosis (a type of programmed cell death essential for stopping the proliferation of cancer cells). In addition, the study determined that Wild Cherry Bark (as well as Horehound) offers anti-inflammatory benefits.

Although the study's authors note that Wild Cherry Bark may hold potential as a cancer-preventing agent, more research is needed before Wild Cherry Bark can be recommended for cancer prevention. Anything strong enough to work against cancer is a very strong herb. This is the biggest reason why I would give any credence at all to the cautions some people have associated with this herb.

Wild Cherry Bark is an anti-inflammatory remedy and can relieve muscle pain that is due to tightness in the muscles. This muscle tension relief applies very strongly to menstrual cramping.