

The East London Garden Society

Plant Facts

Ashwagandha



Ashwagandha, also known as winter cherry or Indian ginseng, is a popular herb in Ayurvedic medicine. Literally it translates as 'odour of horse' because of the distinct smell it emits, which is similar to horse sweat. Some accounts say that it was named as such because it gives you the endurance and strength of a horse. In Ayurvedic medicine, ashwagandha herb is classified as a type of essence that helps with the healing of the body and the lengthening of life.

The Ashwagandha plant comes from the same as tomatoes. It's a small shrub with distinct red berries and five-petal flowers, but the most important part of the plant is the root because that's where the powder used for tonics and tinctures is extracted, impacting on your immune system, your ability to deal with stress as well as your cognitive responses.

As an Ayurvedic herb, it is said that ashwagandha offers numerous benefits when ingested or used as a medicine. Ashwagandha for children is usually in the form of a tonic, whereas ashwagandha for adults is in supplement or capsule form. The different parts of the ashwagandha plant have various medicinal purposes. The leaves are used to help treat fever, swelling and inflammation of the eye. It can also be used with ashwagandha root to help treat ulcers.

Ashwagandha root extract, together with the berries of the plant, are used for the production of tonics and capsules. It can be used to make tea, providing you with many health uses.

Ashwaganda comes in various forms. While there is no standard dose, it is usually recommended that you only ingest 3 to 6 grams of this powder daily. To get the maximum health benefits that the plant offers, you should make sure to use fresh Ashwagandha. Ideally, you should buy organic Ashwagandha to avoid ingesting pesticides and other harmful chemicals used in conventional farming.

Ashwagandha root powder can be used as a poultice to help treat wounds. Mix the powder with water to make a smooth paste and apply to the wound. It will help fight off bacteria, alleviate pain and speed up the healing process.

Ashwagandha can help improve your immunity, support your digestive system, and maintain the health of your heart by regulation of the blood circulation to prevent blood clots. It also keeps blood pressure limits within the normal range.

Ashwagandha increases your oestrogen levels, allowing the skin to keep its youthful appearance.

Ashwagandha helps slow down the deterioration of brain cells in patients with dementia. The herb may also help deal with depression because of its ability to combat mental and emotional stress.

If applying ashwagandha to the skin, make sure it is diluted in a carrier oil such as coconut or almond oil. Always do a skin patch test to see if allergic reactions occur and consult your physician before ingesting ashwagandha oil.