**Eleutherococcus senticosus**  
[el-ew-ther-oh-KOK-us sen-tih-KOH-sus]

**Family:** Araliaceae

**Names:** eleuthero root, taiga root, ci-wu-jia, wu-jia-pi (Chinese)

**Description:** A deciduous, hardy shrub, growing to 10 feet with spiky stalks and compound leaves of five leaflets each. It has small greenish white flowers and a round black berry. The epidermis of the root is used in medicine, it is sold in brown, rolled fragments. Not a true ginseng but it contains similar active chemicals and studies show it has similar effects.

**Cultivation:** Siberian ginseng is native to eastern Russia, China, Korea and Japan. It can be grown from seed, but it is a difficult plant to germinate. The root is lifted in autumn and dried.

**History:** Siberian ginseng owes its origins as a tonic to a Russian physician, I.I. Brekman, who was searching for plants that improve human performance in the 1950s. He studied ginseng, but it was too expensive for the Soviets to consider giving to millions of workers. So Brekman turned to eleuthero, a plant that grew in abundance in Russia. He did no controlled clinical studies, but he did try eleuthero on thousands of workers. In many studies, he found that it countered fatigue, improved performance, and strengthened immunity to disease.

**Constituents:** Eleutherosides, Phenylpropanoids, lignans, coumarins, sugars, polysaccharides, triterpenoid saponins, glycans

**Action:** adaptogenic, tonic, stimulant, protects the immune system

**Energetics:** acrid, sweet, bitter

**Organs/Meridians Affected:** kidney, liver

**Medicinal Uses:** There has been much research into Siberian ginseng in Russia since the 1950s, although the exact method by which it stimulates stamina and resistance to stress is not yet understood. Siberian ginseng seems to have a general tonic effect on the body, in particular on the adrenal glands, helping the body to withstand heat, cold, infection, other physical stresses and radiation. It has even been given to astronauts to counter the effects of weightlessness. Athletes have experienced as much as a 9% improvement in stamina when taking Siberian ginseng. Siberian ginseng is given to improve mental resilience, for example, during exams, and to reduce the effects of physical stress, for example during
athletic training. Siberian ginseng is most effective in the treatment of prolonged exhaustion and debility, resulting from overwork and long-term stress. The herb also stimulates immune resistance and can be taken in convalescence to aid recovery from chronic illness. As a general tonic, Siberian ginseng helps both to prevent infection and to maintain well-being. It is also used in treatments for impotence. Eleuthero root happens to be anti-yeast and immune supportive. For acute yeast infections, take 10-15 capsules per day or 3-5 as a long-term preventative. Eleuthero may also protect the liver and lower blood pressure and triglyceride levels.

**TCM:** Tonifies blood; nourishes semen-essence; tonifies kidney-energy

**Indications:** deficient kidney-energy and liver-energy

**Dosage:** decoction 5-10 rams in two doses, on an empty stomach

**Contraindications:** males with the condition of empty yin with flaring fire should abstain from using this herb or use it very sparingly

**Incompatible:** Scrophularia oldhami

**Remedies:**

**Decoction:** Take 35 ml twice a day as a general tonic

**Tincture:** During busy periods, take ½ tsp with water 3 times a day

**Capsules:** Make with powder and for long-term stress take a 1 g capsule daily

**Tablets:** a convenient way of taking Siberian ginseng. Use before exams or other stressful events.

**Herbal Formula for Males to improve Conception:**

1 oz muira puama bark
3 oz Panax ginseng root
2 oz Siberian ginseng root
2 oz damiana
6 oz spearmint or peppermint herb

Make a standard decoction using ½ oz of the bark/root plants blend in a pint of cold water; cover, bring to a boil, and simmer for 30 minutes. Turn off the heat, add ½ oz of the mixture of the last 2 herbs, cover, and steep for 15 more minutes. Strain and add honey if desired. Drink one cup twice a day, morning and early evening. Drink 6 days a week, taking a break on the 7th day. Continue for at least 10-12 weeks.

**Immune Support for compromised Immune Systems**

2 parts astragalus root
1 part codonopsis root
1 part ligustrum berries
2 parts Siberian ginseng root
1 part saw palmetto berries
1 part licorice root
½ part prickly ash bark

Place 12 tablespoons of the herbs in 2 quarts of cool water and steep overnight. Simmer the mixture for 30-40 minutes the following morning. Do not bother to strain off the herbs—let them continue to steep throughout the day. Drink 2-3 cups per day for many months. Add 10-20 drops of Siberian ginseng tincture to the tea. This combination of herbs can also be made into a tincture which adults can take 25-50 drops, two to four times per day and children 5-10 drops, two to four times per day for several months. Do not take during active stages of any infection, cold or flu.

**Recipes:**

**Chi Balls**

2 cups tahini or almond butter
2 tsp Siberian ginseng (powdered)
1 tsp spirulina
2 tsp bee pollen granules
1 tsp flaxseed oil
1 ½ cups honey
½ cup raisins
½ cup crushed almonds

Mix first seven ingredients in a bowl. Roll into little balls or logs. Drop them in a bowl of crushed almonds and roll until completely covered. Place on wax paper and chill until ready to eat. Makes about 20 balls.

**Toxicity:** Not given to children, or taken for longer than three weeks at a time. Contraindicated with caffeine.

**References:**


Sources:
Wood Violet Herb Farm, www.woodvioletherbfarm.com plants