**BOLDO LEAF**

*Peumus boldus*

[PYOO-mus]

**Family:** Monimiaceae

**Names:** boldu, boldus, boldoa fragrans

**Description:** strongly aromatic multibranched evergreen shrub or tree growing to 20 ft. Has egg-shaped leathery leaves about 2 inches long with a lemony scent, clusters of white or yellow bell-shaped flowers, and small yellow berries

**Cultivation:** Boldo is native to Chile and Peru, and naturalized in the Mediterranean region and the west coast of North America. It grows on dry sunny slopes and in mountain pastures in the Andes, where it is much cultivated. Prefers well-drained, sandy, acid soil in sun. Propagate by seed sown in spring, or by semiripe cuttings in summer. The leaves are gathered throughout the year. Dry them carefully in shade not over 104°F

**History:** Boldo is a traditional remedy used by the Araucanian people in Chile as a tonic. The berries were also eaten as a food. For many years in Chile the fruit has been eaten as a spice, the wood used for charcoal and the bark has been used in tanning hides. It is also used in Chilean folk medicine as an anthelmintic against worms which activity has been attributed to its ascaridole content of the essential oil found the leaves. In parts of Peru the leaves are used by indigenous tribes against liver diseases and to treat gallstones as well as a diuretic. The indigenous uses were verified early by researchers who showed that boldo leaves had diuretic, stomachic and cholagogic properties. It was first investigated by a French physician in 1869.

**Constituents:** Boldo contains: Myrtenal, 1,8-cineole, 1-methyl-4-isopropenyl-benzene, 2-decanone, 2-heptaone, 2-nonanone, 2-octanone, Alpha-3-carene, Alpha-fenchol, Alpha-hexylcinnamaldehyde, Alpha-methylionone, Alpha-pinene, Alpha-terpineol, Ascaridole, Benzaldehyde, Benzyl-benzoate, Beta-pinene, Boldine, Boldoglucin, Bornyl-acetate, Camphene, Camphor, Choline, Coumarin, Cuminaldehyde, Diethyl-phthalate, EO, Eugenol, Farnesol, Fenchone, Gamma-terpinene, Isoboldine, Isocorydine, Isocorydine-n-oxide, Isorhamnetin-3-glucoside-7-rhamnoside, Kaempferol-3-glucoside-7-rhamnoside, Laurolitsine, Laurotetanine, Limonene, Linalool, Methyl-eugenol, Norisocorydine, P-cymene, P-cymol, Rhamnetin-3-arabinoside-3’-rhamnoside, Sabinene, Sparteine, Tannin, Terpinen-4-OI, Terpinolene, 2-tridecanone, 2-undecanone, etasomethylionone, Boldin, Gum, Isorhamnetin-3-alpha-l-arabinopyranosid\ E-7-alpha-l-rhamn, N-methyllaurotetanine, Pachypcarpine, Resin, Reticuline

**Properties:** cholagogue, hepatic, diuretic, sedative, tonic; aromatic, choleric,
spasmolytic, stomachic, urinary antiseptic, urinary demulcent

**Energetics:** bitter, cool

**Meridians/Organs Affected:** liver, spleen, kidneys

**Medicinal Uses:** Boldo is one of the best liver tonics in the world and also has an affinity for kidneys and bladder. Boldo activates the secretion of saliva and stimulates liver activity and bile flow and is chiefly valued as a remedy for gallstones and liver or gallbladder pain. **Boldine,** one of its constituents, induces the flow of bile as well as the total amount of solids that it excretes. Its protective action over the hepatic cells has been demonstrated "in vitro" and "in vivo". It is normally taken for a few weeks at a time, either as a tincture or infusion. Boldo is also a mild urinary antiseptic and demulcent, and may be taken for infections such as cystitis. In the Anglo-American tradition, boldo is combined with barberry and fringe tree in the treatment of gallstones. It makes a drinkable tea and combined with goldenseal is excellent for kidney and bladder infections.

Boldo leaves are the subject of a German therapeutic monograph which allows the use for mild gastrointestinal spasms and dyspeptic disorders as well as a subject of a US monograph which shows that boldo causes clinically significant diuresis. The plant is used in homeopathy in the treatment of digestive disorders, as a laxative, choleretic, diuretic, and for hepatic disturbances. The leaves have been used for worms, and Dr. James Duke reports its traditional use for urogenital inflammations like gonorrhea and syphilis, as well as for gout, jaundice, dyspepsia, rheumatism, head colds and earaches. Boldo is rich in phytochemicals including at least 17 known alkaloids. A total of at least 38 phytochemical compounds have been identified. Antioxidant properties of the leaves has also been documented. A recent human study demonstrated that Boldo relaxes smooth muscle and prolongs intestinal transit which validated again its traditional medicinal uses. The average therapeutic dose is reported to be 2-3 grams daily.

**Combinations:**
- Gall-bladder or liver problems: fringetree bark and Mountain Grape

**Dosage:**
- **Infusion:** pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 tsp of the dried leaves and let infuse for 10-15 minutes. Drink 3 times a day.
- **Tincture:** take 1-2ml 3 times a day

**Remedies:** Boldo Extract: ¼ to 1 teaspoon 3 times a day, as directed by healthcare professional. Always take with plenty of juice or with water at mealtime, unless instructed otherwise.

**Aromatherapy:**
- **EXTRACTION:** Essential oil by steam distillation of the leaves
- **CHARACTERISTICS:** a yellow liquid with a powerful spicy-camphoraceous, disagreeable odor
- **USES:** used in pharmaceuticals in minute amounts for its therapeutic properties

**Cosmetic Uses:** All parts of the plant, the twiggy shoots, the pea-sized fruits and the leaves are fragrant. After dying in the sun, they turn red and the perfume increases in strength. When dry, they are ground into powder and mixed with equal amounts of orris root and French chalk to make an attractively scented talcum powder.

**Toxicity:** Do not take this herb during pregnancy. Boldo is subject to legal restrictions in some countries.

**References:**