Tabebuia impetiginosa
[ta-bee-BEW-ee-uh im-pet-eye-gin-OH-suh]

Family: Bignoniaceae

Names: Lapacho (Spanish); taheebo, ipe-roxa

Description: An indigenous South American evergreen tree (deciduous in cold climates) reaching 100 feet with pink flowers. Lapacho grows well in mountainous terrains. In Peru and Argentina it is found growing high up in the Andes. Lapacho is also found in low-lying areas where it is thought to have originated. A number of Tabebuia species are used in herbal medicine. *T. avellanedae* is considered to be the most therapeutically effective, but *T. impetignosa* is the species that is most commonly available. Lapacho is not normally cultivated. The inner bark of the tree is what is most effective and should be stripped carefully, since the outer bark, which is often sold as pau d’arco, contains little of the healing properties. It should also be aged.

Cultivation: Well-drained, fertile soil in sun, minimum 61-64F. Propagate by seed or air layering in spring, or by semiripe cuttings in summer. Young plants may be trimmed in autumn. Wood and inner bark are dried for decoctions, powder, tablets.

History: The native Indians of the South American rainforests have used lapacho for thousands of years, even prior to the Inca civilization. It has long been thought of as a general tonic for nearly everything, similar to ginseng in the East. They used it to treat a variety of conditions including wounds, fever, dysentery, intestinal inflammation, certain types of cancer, and snakebites. Lapacho, which is the Indian name of the plant, means “the divine tree.” It was noticed by the natives that the tree never attracted mold or mildew after being chopped down and is known as the tree with strength and vigor.

Constituents: quinines (lapachol); bioflavonoids; lapachenole; carnosol, indoles, coenzyme !, alkaloids (tecomine), steroidal saponins

Properties: antibiotic, antifungal, immunostimulant, anti-inflammatory, cleansing, tonic antitumor, alterative, hepatic, bitter,

Medicinal Uses: Given the large number of active constituents in lapacho, it is not surprising that this beneficial herb is used in South America and by herbal practitioners throughout the world. It is an important, natural antibiotic for bacterial and viral infections, especially of the nose, mouth, and throat and is considered helpful for chronic conditions such as ME. Lapacho is also used to treat fungal conditions, including ringworm and yeast infections and is considered especially useful for treating chronic fungal conditions, including candidiasis.
Lapacho reduces and relieves inflammatory problems, especially in the stomach and intestines. It is used to treat a wide range of inflammatory conditions, including cystitis, inflammation of the cervix, and prostates.

Lapacho’s anticancer action is controversial, but research in Brazil, which started during the 1960s indicates that the bark may be therapeutically useful in treating cancer and leukemia. Many of the herb’s constituents play a part in counteracting the growth of tumors, notably lapachol, which inhibits the growth of tumor cells by preventing them from metabolizing oxygen. Lapacho is known to be strongly anti-inflammatory. It also counters the effects of diabetes and it lowers blood pressure. A vaginal douche can be made from the tea. It may also be applied to the skin.

**Dosage:** decoction: for candidiasis, take 1 cup 3 times a day
Tincture: is suitable for long term use. For ME, take 2 ml with water 3 mines a day.

**Ritual Uses:** Planet: Jupiter, Element: Fire; Gender: male; sign: Sagittarius

**References:**
 Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants

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