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Cat's Claw: Rainforest Plant Kills Cancer Cells and Provides Hope for Arthritis Relief

Monday, August 17, 2009 by: Melanie Grimes, citizen journalist
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(NaturalNews) Cat's claw, also know as *Uncaria tomentosa* and *una de gato*, is a vine from the Peruvian jungle. This plant has been used as medicine for over two thousand years by the Peruvian tribe, the Ashaninka. It is known by them as the "Sacred Herb of the Rain Forest." Cat's claw contains compounds called pentacyclic oxindole alkaloids (POAs) that have been shown to support the immune system, prevent cancers, and possibly treat AIDS. In Europe, the bark is combined with the AIDS drug AZT in some clinical trials.

Cat's claw is sold as an herbal tonic in various forms: leaves, bark, and twigs. But the part of the **cat's claw** plant that contains the most **medicine** is the roots, even though the plant is named for thorns at the base of the leaves that resemble cat claws. Because of these thorns, the plant can grow as tall as 100 feet, vining around the trunk of large trees.

Homeopathically, Cat's Claw is used to treat gastric disturbances, such as ulcers, parasites diverticulitis, leaky gut syndrome, and Crohn's **disease** and Alzheimer's. In herbal medicine, Cat's Claw has been used to treat hormonal problems, such as PMS, CFS and prostate problems, and there has been some success in treating diabetes as well.

The POAs in Cat's Claw work by supporting the white **blood** cells (WBC). These are the cells that help with immunity. One of the functions of the WBC is to gobble up, and eliminate bacteria and **viruses**. POA does this by increasing the production of interleukin by the WBC. POAs also help a type of cell called B cells. B cells create antibodies against one type of virus or bacteria. After taking Cat's claw, research discovered an increase in the number of B cells. This is an important function, especially with new viruses mutating, such as Swine Flu H1N1.

Cat's Claw also helps the body create more T cells. T cells attack **cancer cells** and also AIDS viruses found in the blood stream.

Some Cat's claw plants do not contain POAs, but instead contain an alkaloid called tetracyclic oxindole (TOAs). This substance does not have the beneficial **health** effects of the POAs, so it is important to read the labels on supplements to make sure the product has the requisite amount of active substance.

Studies are underway at the National Institute on Aging that are investigating the role of Cat's Claw on the brain and in treating Alzheimer's disease.

Some of the compounds in the Cat's Claw plant are able to block inflammation and tumor necrosis factor (TNF). Scientists are therefore hopeful that this will lead to a cure for **arthritis**.

Side effects for Cat's Claw are few, but do include dizziness, vomiting and headaches. It can cause abortion, so pregnant women, or those hoping to become pregnant, should avoid it.

<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/catclaw/>
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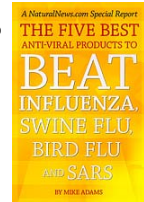
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About the author

Melanie Grimes is a writer, screenwriter, journal editor, and adjunct faculty member at Bastyr University. She has written an eBook on natural treatments for [the flu](#), available at her blog. A trained homeopath, she also raises alpacas and is an avid spinner. She is the editor of the [homeopathic journal](#). Simillimum, has been a medical editor for 15 years, won awards as a screenwriter, taught creative writing, founded the first Birkenstock store in the USA ([www.mjfeet.com](#)) and authored medical textbooks. Her eBook on Natural Remedies for the Flu is available at: [http://melanie-grimes.blogspot.com/...](http://melanie-grimes.blogspot.com/)
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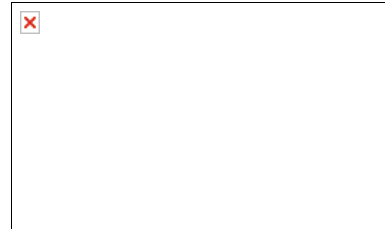
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