

Andrographis paniculata

Andrographis paniculata, commonly known as Andrographis or “King of Bitters,” is a medicinal herb native to South and Southeast Asia. It has been traditionally used in Ayurvedic, Chinese, and other traditional medicine systems for immune support, respiratory wellness, and general health maintenance. Today, Andrographis is widely utilized in herbal supplements and immune-support formulations worldwide.

Key facts

- **Scientific name:** *Andrographis paniculata*
- **Common names:** Andrographis, King of Bitters
- **Family:** Acanthaceae
- **Active compounds:** Andrographolide, flavonoids
- **Typical forms:** Capsules, teas, extracts, tablets

Botanical characteristics

Andrographis paniculata is an annual herbaceous plant with slender green stems, lance-shaped leaves, and small white flowers with purple markings. The aerial parts of the plant are harvested and processed into medicinal preparations.

Traditional and modern uses

Traditionally, Andrographis has been used to support immune function, respiratory comfort, digestion, and fever management. In modern herbal medicine, it is commonly promoted for upper respiratory wellness, immune support, and seasonal health formulations.

Mechanism and research

Research suggests that andrographolide and related compounds may exhibit anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and immunomodulatory properties. Clinical studies have explored its role in upper respiratory tract symptoms and immune support, although additional high-quality research remains ongoing.

Safety and regulation

Andrographis is generally considered safe when used in moderate amounts. Possible side effects may include gastrointestinal discomfort, headache, or allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Pregnant individuals and those with autoimmune conditions should consult healthcare professionals before use.

Culinary and supplement context

Due to its intensely bitter taste, Andrographis is primarily used in capsules, extracts, and herbal formulations rather than culinary applications. It remains widely available in immune-support supplements and traditional herbal wellness products globally.