

Ulmus fulva

Ulmus fulva, commonly known as Slippery Elm, is a deciduous tree native to eastern North America. Its inner bark has been traditionally used for centuries in Indigenous and herbal medicine for soothing the digestive tract, throat, and irritated tissues. Today, Slippery Elm remains widely utilized in herbal wellness and gastrointestinal support products.

Key facts

- **Scientific name:** *Ulmus fulva* (synonym: *Ulmus rubra*)
- **Common names:** Slippery Elm
- **Family:** Ulmaceae
- **Active compounds:** Mucilage polysaccharides, tannins, antioxidants
- **Typical forms:** Powders, teas, capsules, lozenges

Botanical characteristics

Ulmus fulva is a medium-sized deciduous tree with rough-textured leaves and reddish-brown inner bark. The medicinally valuable inner bark is harvested, dried, and processed into powders and herbal preparations.

Traditional and modern uses

Traditionally, Slippery Elm has been used to soothe sore throats, digestive irritation, coughs, and inflammatory discomfort. In modern herbal medicine, it is commonly promoted for gastrointestinal support, throat comfort, and mucosal soothing formulations.

Mechanism and research

Research suggests that the mucilage content of Slippery Elm forms a soothing gel-like layer that may help protect irritated mucosal tissues. Studies have explored its potential supportive role in digestive comfort and throat soothing, although further clinical research remains ongoing.

Safety and regulation

Slippery Elm is generally considered safe when consumed in moderate amounts. Due to its mucilage properties, it may affect the absorption of certain medications if taken simultaneously. Adequate hydration is recommended during use.

Culinary and supplement context

Ulmus fulva is primarily used in herbal teas, powders, lozenges, and digestive-support formulations rather than culinary products. It remains widely valued in traditional and modern herbal wellness markets.