



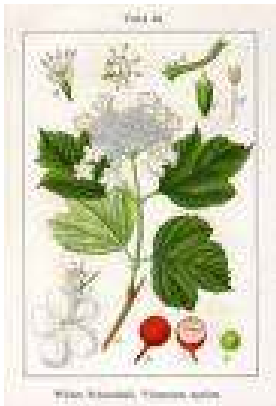
# Willow Moon Herbals

## Cramp Bark/Black Haw

**Latin binomial:** *Viburnum Opulus L. / Viburnum prunifolium*

**Description:** A native shrub of the eastern US, cramp bark has showy white snowball-like flower clusters and soft fuzzy leaves.

The bark is harvested for medicine. Cramp Bark can be purchased as tablets or in capsule form, in liquid tinctures, and in bulk for tea.



Cramp Bark

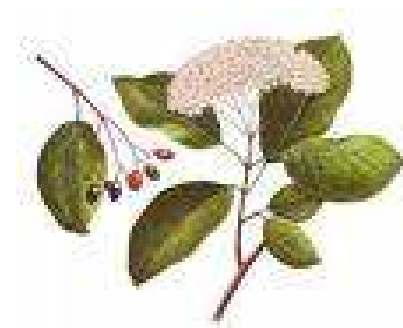
Historically, *Viburnum opulus* has many common names for the many places it grows: Cramp bark, snowball tree, king's crown, high cranberry, red elder, rose elder, water elder, May rose, Whitsun rose, dog rowan tree, silver bells, gaiter berries, black haw. The "Gaitre-Berries" which are mentioned by Chaucer, are really a shrub that grows between 5' -10' high, and belongs to the same family as the Elder. It is often found in copses and hedgerows throughout England, though rare in Scotland, and is also indigenous to North America where it is usually found in low grounds in the eastern United States.

This botanical is related to *Viburnum prunifolium*, better known as Black Haw, and has similar properties. Sometimes, it is referred to interchangeably with Black Haw. Both are recognized in 19<sup>th</sup> Century pharmacology reference books as the treatment for menstrual cramps. The bark contains at least four substances that help relax the uterus. Two (aesculetin and scopoletin) also help relieve muscle spasms. Some herbalists prefer Black Haw over Cramp Bark, and vice versa. If one works for you, both will work for you. If one doesn't work for you, most likely the other will not work for you, either.

**Uses:** Cramp bark/black haw is a renowned herbal remedy known for easing menstrual and intestinal cramping. Formerly it was included in the official US Pharmacopoeia, and then was part of the National Formulary in the form of a Fluid Extract, Compound Tincture and Compound Elixir and was used as a nerve sedative and antispasmodic in asthma and hysteria.

*Sources: Herbal Remedies for Dummies (C. Hobbs);*

*The Green Pharmacy (J. Duke); A Modern Herbal (M. Grieve)*



Black Haw

*Note: Any remedies listed on this web site are from historical references and used for teaching purposes only. The contents are not meant to diagnose, treat, prescribe, or substitute consultation with a licensed health-care professional.*