

# LICORICE

**Botanical Name:**

*Glycyrrhiza glabra*

**Common Names:**

Sweet root, sweet wood, sweet wort, mulathi, liquorice, Spanish/Chinese/Persian/Russian licorice

**Parts Used:**

Dried root

**Active Compounds:**

Glycyrrhizin, one of the main active ingredients, reduces inflammation, promotes secretion of mucous (usually through coughing), and stimulates the activity of the adrenal glands. Other components are flavonoids, coumarins, volatile oils and others.

**Looks like:**

Licorice is a perennial that grows 3 to 7 feet high; it has an extensive branching root system. The peeled and unpeeled roots and the underground stems of the plant are used for products.

**Where it's grown:**

Individual varieties of *Glycyrrhiza* are found in different regions of some parts of Europe and Asia.

**History:**

It is believed that the Greeks were the first to become aware of the medicinal properties of licorice, as the Greek origin of the plant confirms this *glukos*, "sweet", and *riza*, "root". Licorice was prescribed for a non-productive cough, to cure asthma and other respiratory diseases, as well as to fight thirst. However, first use of this plant goes back thousands of years before Christ – Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Chinese and the Hindus knew and used licorice.

**Use:**

Research studies confirmed, licorice prevents and treats stomach ulcers. It promotes secretion of mucous and thus has beneficial effects in respiratory ailments (e.g. bronchitis, colds, allergies). Clinical studies have shown that glycyrrhizin inhibits liver injury caused by, for instance, hepatitis C virus or a known carcinogen such as PCB. However, large daily doses of licorice (more than 20g/day for extended period of time) may cause serious side effects including headache, high blood pressure, and heart problems.

