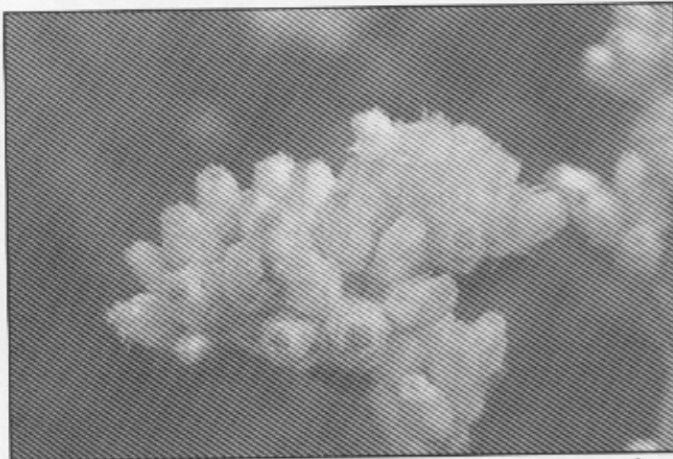
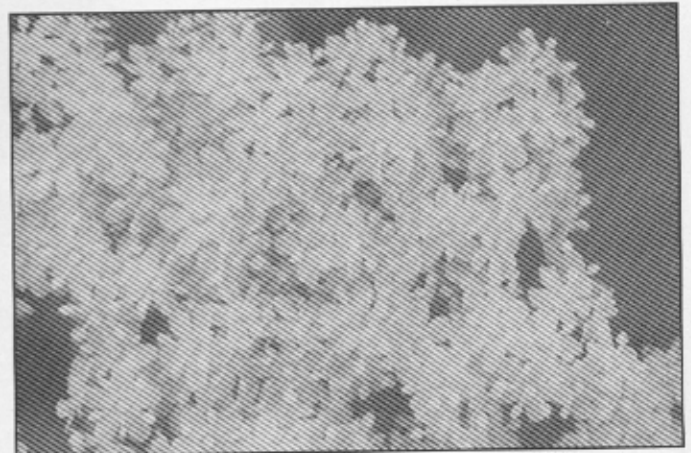


Native Treatments for Colds and Flu

by James D. Adams, Jr. and Cecilia Garcia



California everlasting (*Gnaphalium californicum*) plant used to make a hot drink to decrease the duration of a cold or the flu.



Elderberry flowers (*Sambucus mexicana*) made into a tea is another good treatment for colds or the flu.

During the Mission period, the Spanish introduced the influenza into California. The flu devastated the Indian population in most California Missions; colds were already present. The native Chumash people quickly discovered that cold remedies work well against the flu. Of course, the most widely used treatment for colds and flu is a good heat treatment in the sweat lodge. Heat treatments should last about 15 minutes and should be followed by a recuperation period involving drinking 8 ounces or more of water to replace lost fluids.

California everlasting (*Gnaphalium californicum*) can be used to decrease the duration of a cold or flu. About 2 teaspoons of the flowers are put into a cup. Boiling water is added to the cup and allowed to steep for about 5 minutes. A stick of cinnamon and some brown sugar can be added for flavor. Brown sugar is an authentic Chumash ingredient. A half leaf of white sage

(*Salvia apiana*) should be added in the final minutes of steeping. California everlasting tea should be drunk every evening for three days. Rest during these three days will help recovery.

California everlasting is found throughout California and Baja California at altitudes below 5,000 feet. The crushed leaves smell like an orange. The flowers smell like maple syrup. The plant contains several flavonoids and diterpenoids. Some of these compounds have antimicrobial activity and may be useful against pneumonia. Some of the diterpenoids are mild pain relievers.

Elderberry flower tea (*Sambucus mexicana*) is another good treatment that decreases the duration of colds and flu. Put about 2 teaspoons of elderberry flowers into a cup. Add boiling water to the cup and steep for 5 minutes. Brown sugar can be added for flavor. Add a half leaf of white sage (*Salvia apiana*) in the final minutes of steeping.

Elderberry tea is milder than everlasting tea and should be drunk every morning and evening for 5 days.

Elderberry flowers contain anthocyanins, flavonoids, lectins, and many other compounds. It is not clear what in the plant is stimulating the immune system to relieve colds and flu. An elderberry preparation is available in Europe for use against colds and influenza.

Prevention of colds and flu involves white sage (*Salvia apiana*), California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), yerba santa (*Eriodictyon trichocalyx*) or hibiscus (*Hibiscus* sp.).

More information about life in the Missions can be found in *Estanislao - Warrior, Man of God* by J.D. Adams. More information about healing with California plants can be found in *Healing with Medicinal Plants of the West* by C. Garcia and J.D. Adams. Both books are available at Amazon.com. ✎