

Cherokee Ethnobiology

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RATTLESNAKE MASTER

Cherokee Usage

Rattlesnake Master is known by Cherokee experts as a “warrior’s plant” and as a “survival kit.” The button of the root, when prepared correctly, can be carried as “protection” by those who are called to war. It can also be carried as protection for those who spend a great deal of time in the woods as a source of energy as well as a snake repellent (when a snake is encountered it will move away from you). The root is also a snakebite remedy – apply the fresh root to the snakebite wound and the venom will be detoxified. The tentacles of the root are believed to possess anti-oxidant qualities. The blossoms of Rattlesnake Master were once used to encourage the detachment of the umbilical cord from newborns (a poultice was made and applied to the navel). This plant was likely never widespread, but is now becoming even scarce.

Description

Rattlesnake Master is a perennial plant that can grow up to 3’ tall. Its leaves are alternate and linear. They have parallel veins, a leathery texture, and have toothed margins which are sharp-spined. The white flowers end in a terminal umbel and are egg-shaped. When the fruit matures, each fruit will contain two or more seeds.

Where found: Prairies, roadsides, and wooded areas.

Other Name: Button Snakeroot

Taxonomy:

Kingdom - Plantae
 Phylum - Magnoliophyta
 Class - Magnoliopsida
 Order – Apiales
 Family – Apiaceae
 Genus — *Eryngium*
 Species — *yuccifolium*

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