**Indian Pipe, *Monotropa uniflora***

**Names**

convulsionroot5, convulsionweed5, eyebright5,

Ghost flower1, ghost plant, corpse plant, fit-plant1, fitroot1, iceplant2, pipe-plant1,

**Description**

Indian Pipe is distinctive for its white, translucent color due to lack of chlorophyll. Often marked by black flecks, the plant may also be a pale pinkish-white.

Found in “mature, moist, shaded forests”3, the plant’s single flower (uniflora) may be seen from early summer to early fall. This flower initially points downward, but as it matures, it slowly swivels until pointing straight up.

The plant may be found in Alaska and most continental US states with an exception from the “southwest, intermountain west and the central Rocky mountains.”2

Indian pipe gathers nourishment from the thread-like roots of fungi which in turn are feeding off decaying plant matter.

**Parts Used:** Roots, leaves, flower spikes3

**Uses:**

Eyes

* Native Americans used juice of the pulverized plant mixed with water7
* Early American anecdote of using the “fresh juice from the stems” 5

Colds/Fevers

* Native Americans used it as a tea for aches and pains due to colds2

Convulsions, fits, epilepsy

* Tea from the root2

Nervous/system

* Tincture for “acute anxiety and panic attacks marked by emotional or sensory overload.”6 This includes overwhelming experiences from LSD or psychoactive mushrooms.6
* Tea from dried stalks. 6
* Nervous irritability, use tea from the root4

Pain

* Tincture from the root. David Winston: Has found tinctures from the aerial parts to be equivalent and more sustainable.
* David Winston: “I often say that it seemed more like getting Nitrous Oxide at the dentist than an analgesic, you know that it hurts, but simply don't care. The term that is used for this is antinociceptive, which means something that reduces sensitivity to painful stimuli. So Monotropa is primarily an antinociceptive, it raises the pain threshold.”6

**Actions**: antibacterial2, anti-spasmodic2, antinociceptive (raises pain threshold), bactericide2, eye inflammation, nervine, sedative, and tonic2

**Harvest**: “Roots in the fall, whole plant in season.”2 Note: Indian pipe is now endangered. It requires unique

**Contra-indications**: Not for use in pregnancy or while lactating.

**References**

1 Henkel, Alice. *Wild medicinal plants of the United States*. No. 89. US Government Printing Office, 1906.

2 Church, Bill. *Medicinal Plants, Trees, & Shrubs of Appalachia-A Field Guide*. Lulu. com, 2006.

3 US Forest Service, Monotropa uniflora – Ghost Plant, Indian Pipe

4 American Folk Medicine: A Symposium edited by Wayland Debs Hand, p. 165

5 Sanders, Jack. "Ghost of Summer's Woods." The Missouri Review, Volume 11, Number 3, 1988, pp. 84-88 , 10.1353/mis.1988.0073

6 Donahue, Sean. Ghost Pipe: A Little Known Nervine. Monograph. American Herbalist Guild. Accessed July 3, 2016. http://www.americanherbalistsguild.com/sites/default/files/donahue\_sean\_-\_ghost\_pipe-\_a\_little\_known\_nervine.pdf

7Morgan, Erin E., and James E. Perry. "Traditional Medicinal Plant Use Among Virginia’s Powhatan Indians." (2010): 11-31.

**Images**

Page 1: http://www.uniprot.org/taxonomy/29818