**Reishi**



# Compiled by Jehanne-Marie Gavarini – GavHerbs

**Botanical Name***:* Ganoderma Lucidum

**Family:** Ganodermataceae (Shelf fungi)

* + 1. **.:** Reishi (in Japan) Ling Zhi (in China), Lin Zi, Mushroom of Immortality, Plant of Longevity,

**Description:** Beautiful kidney-shaped mushroom. It is a hard and bitter fungus that has been used in the traditional medical systems of China, Japan, Korea and other Asian countries for over two thousand years. David Winston explains that the Chinese *Shennong Bencao Jing* lists 6 different types of reishi, each with its unique qualities: blue/green, red, yellow, white, black and purple.

**Parts used:** Mycelium

# Constituents:

Red Reishi is primarily composed of water-soluble polysaccharides (complex carbohydrates), triterpeniods (the substance extracted with alcohol), proteins and amino acids. Research has identified that water-soluble polysaccharides are the most active anti-tumor, immune modulating and blood pressure regulators in this mushroom.

Studies indicate that the triterpenes , or ganoderic acids, help alleviate common allergies by inhibiting histamine release, improving oxygen utilization and improving liver functions. “Triterpenes are bitter in taste and the level of the triterpene content contained in a product can be determined by the bitterness” (Guide to Reishi Mushrooms). Also contains ergosterol 0.3-0.4%, fungal lysozyme and acidic proteases, water-soluble proteins, amino acids, peptides, alkaloids, lucidemic acid and ganolucidic acid.

# Medicinal Properties:

* + - * Free-radical scavenger
      * Anti-senescence
      * Neuro-protective
      * Hypo-lipidemic (Lowers cholesterol)
      * Cardiovascular tonic (helps angina, arteriosclerosis and arrhythmia)
      * Hypotensive
      * Antitumor
      * Antiviral
      * Chemotherapy (both enhancing and protective)
      * Radiation protective
      * Hepato and Kidney protective
      * Stress reducer
      * Helps with altitude sickness (when taken several weeks ahead of time)
      * promotes the production of blood and qi
      * improves adrenocortical function
      * relieves stress

# Uses:

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, reishi is used as a tonic for deficient vital energy, to nourish and strengthen the heart (which stores *shen)*, and enhance memory. It is know to have anti-aging effects. Today herbalists recommend reishi as an adaptogen, which combats stress, fatigue, weakness and allergies. It is an immune modulator (works both to strengthen the immune system and down–regulate excessive immune response in case of auto-immune diseases. It strengthens both the parasympathetic nervous system and the adrenal cortex.

Reishi works as a general tonic especially for patients with HIV and cancer. It is part of treatment for anxiety, high blood pressure, hepatitis, bronchitis, insomnia, chronic fatigue syndrome, shortness of breath and asthma. Reishi is “used for the conservation and promotion of good health and is also good for age-related illnesses such as hypertension, coronary heart disease, and cancer. It has profound immune-enhancing and cancer-suppressing effects” (Yance, 538).

An amphoteric herb, it enhances both energy and sleep. It increases white blood cell count, platelets, hemoglobin and tumor fighting cells. It has stimulating effects on bone marrow. In China, reishi is used to counter the effects of chemotherapy and radiation therapy. It is considered a cholesterol regulator. It is also employed to treat angina pectoris, chronic bronchitis, hepatitis, and leukopenia.

Rosemary Gladstar uses it in her *Brain Alert Formula*.

# Health Benefits:

In addition to the numerous properties listed above, reishi may have beneficial effects on diabetes mellitus. A source of selenium and iron, reishi also provides protein and Vitamin C.

# Research:

There is so much research available on this remedy that it can be overwhelming. Donald Yance and David Winston provide comprehensive monographs with numerous clinical and scholarly references. According to Donald Yance, reishi powdered extract “suppresses cell adhesion and cell migration of highly invasive breast and prostate cancer cells, suggesting its potency to reduce tumor invasiveness”. Further, Yance specifies that it attracts killer T cells that attack tumors; and also activates blood proteins that puncture the tumor cells.

# Caution:

Reishi is a safe medicinal mushroom but use cautiously with blood-thinning medication

# References:

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