

Used to Treat: Fevers in children, childhood diseases, colic, intestinal gas, colds, pimples, bruises

Sáuz

White Willow

Botanical Names: *Salix bonplandiana*, *Salix goodingii*, *Salix taxifolia*, *Salix* spp.

Other Names: *Sáuce*, *Jarita*, *Taray*, *Abuejote*, *Negrito*

Nahuatl: *Quetzalabuexotl*

Searching for an inexpensive substitute for that natural miracle cure, the Peruvian quinine bark, nineteenth-century scientists decided to have a look at the willow, which had been used medicinally at least since the time of Greek physician Dioscorides, primarily as an astringent. Meanwhile, back in Tenochtitlán, the Aztecs had been treating fever with their own *quetzalabuexotl*, royal-plume-water-willow, for centuries. Fray Bernardino de Sahagún reported that Mexican willow bark, administered to young children and old people alike, "removes the fever."

But willow's fever-fighting prowess was not apparent to the rest of the world until the late 1890s when, after some tweaking by a chemist working for the Friedrich Bayer company, a synthetic version of its active ingredient finally hit the drugstores. Acetylsalicylic acid, renamed aspirin, has been reducing fever big time ever since, but some people still continue to prefer good old willow bark. *Sáuz*, is sold in barrio markets. The infusion is used as a fever-reducing tea, a gargle for sore throats, and a compress for arthritic pain, sores, and burns.

Parts Used: Leaf, bark

Properties: Anti-inflammatory, analgesic, fever reducer

Siempre viva

Stonecrop

Botanical Names: *Sedum dendroideum*, *Sedum* spp.

Other Names: *Cola de Borrego*, *Doradilla*

Nahuatl: *Texiotl*, *Tetzmitl*, *Tezmitic*

There are some four hundred species of *Sedum*, most of them low, ground-covering succulents with flat, fleshy, spade-shaped leaves that form little flowerlike clusters. The Aztec Herbal of 1552 lists plants identified as *Sedum* in remedies for mouth inflammations, and Fray Bernardino de Sahagún reported its use in the sixteenth century as a remedy for irritations of the eye. The plant is used today in much the same way for the anti-inflammatory properties recognized by the Aztecs. In Morelos the juice is applied to eye irritations and burns. The leaves are chewed to alleviate the discomfort of sore gums and toothache, and a warmed leaf is just the right size to place carefully inside an aching ear.