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EUROPEAN BARBERRY – ORNAMENTAL AND MEDICINAL PLANT

Summary

Berberis vulgaris L. is a wild shrub common in European countries and an ornamental shrub throughout the world. Its unusual decorative value is caused by red berries which do not fall during the wintertime. Besides, the barberry root and fruit contain various biologically active constituents. These compounds are used in phytotherapy as anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, cardiac, digestive and choleric natural agents. The most important active compound of barberry is alkaloid berberine, a natural antibiotic. In addition, barberry fruit of is a good source of vitamins C and P.

Key words: *Berberis vulgaris* L., berberine, biologically active constituents, phytotherapy