

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### GET PERMISSION

Whether on private or public land, get permission before digging oshá. Some U.S. national forests and state-owned lands allow harvest of oshá, but require a permit. Harvest is not allowed in any national park.

### IDENTIFICATION

Study taxonomy and floral characteristics of oshá to avoid misidentification. Use identification keys in local floras and local herbaria voucher specimens to ensure positive identification as oshá can grow with some toxic, look-alike species and the familiar oshá scent may be transferred through the soil.

The flat-topped umbel of oshá looks similar to hemlock parsley (*Conioselinum scopulorum*), poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), and water hemlock (*Cicuta maculata*), species sometimes found growing in the same terrain as osha. Poison hemlock is fatally toxic, so carefully differentiate and positively identify oshá plants via root, leaf, flower, and fruit characteristics.

Some *Ligusticum* species are rare and should be left alone: *L. apifolium*, *L. californicum*, *L. canbyi*, *L. tenuifolium* and *L. verticillatum*. *L. porteri* is also rare in certain areas. Check with local authorities before harvesting.



*L. porteri* seeds, Image credit: American Herbal Pharmacopoeia, Scotts Valley, CA



## GOOD STEWARDSHIP CHECKLIST

Follow all of these good stewardship practices when harvesting oshá root:

- ✓ Maintain current legal permits and licenses to harvest as well as permission from property owners
- ✓ Do not harvest in any national park; obtain permits for harvest in national forests where allowed
- ✓ Ensure positive identification of oshá before harvest
- ✓ Carry all permits and licenses while collecting

Research supported by:



Kindscher, K., Martin, L.M. & Long, Q. The Sustainable Harvest of Wild Populations of Oshá (*Ligusticum porteri*) in Southern Colorado for the Herbal Products Trade. *Economic Botany* (2019) 73: 341. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12231-019-09456-1>

More info: AHP Oshá Monograph

<https://herbal-ahp.org/online-ordering-osh-root/>



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## GOOD STEWARDSHIP HARVESTING of

### OSHÁ ROOT (*Ligusticum porteri*)

Oshá (*Ligusticum porteri* J.M Coult. & Rose) is a slow growing perennial species from the parsley family (Apiaceae). Its range encompasses the Rocky Mountains from southern Montana and Wyoming through Colorado, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and reaches south into the Sierra Madre of Mexico, generally growing at high elevations ranging from 6,000—11,700 feet (1829—3567m).

Oshá is an ethnobotanically important medicinal plant with large pungent distinctively spicy roots and a long history of traditional use by Native Americans. The roots are highly valued by herbalists and indigenous practitioners; roots are harvested for personal use and for commercial sale by natural products companies. Conservation concerns led to a six-year AHPA supported research study to establish guidance for long term sustainable harvest of osha populations (Kindscher et al. 2019).

More: <https://nativeplants.ku.edu/ethnobotany-research/ligusticum-osh>

Common names: oshá, chuchupate, Colorado cough root. porter's lovage, oshá de la sierra, bear medicine, bear root.



## SITE SELECTION

- 🌿 Evaluate the area to ensure it is free of environmental contaminants.
- 🌿 Obtain special permission or avoid harvesting around tribal areas. Oshá is considered a sacred herb to local tribes.
- 🌿 Keep detailed records of site locations and other collection data including, time, quantity harvested, other species present, etc.
- 🌿 Carry all permits and licenses when collecting.

## GOOD STEWARDSHIP HARVESTING GUIDELINES

- 🌿 Harvest only 1/3 of mature and/or flowering plants, leaving 2/3 of mature plants and all juveniles to propagate.
- 🌿 Do not harvest from the same population year after year. Only go back to the same stand once every 4 or 5 years.
- 🌿 Do not dig in areas where others have already harvested roots. Carefully observe the site for indications of recent harvest including disturbed or dug up soil, or bare patches of dirt without vegetation.
- 🌿 Leave 2/3 of mature and seed-producing plants within the stand. If the site is sloped, collect at the lowest elevation and leave mature plants at the top of a hill to seed the population along the downward slope. Take mature plant lateral roots only and leave the tap root to sustain the population.
- 🌿 Minimize damage to local habitats. Be aware of potential erosion factors and do not trample other plants. Replace soil and replant seeds whenever possible.

## SUSTAINING NATIVE POPULATIONS

- 🌿 Roots should be harvested only from mature plants after the leaves begin to yellow.
- 🌿 Harvest only 1/3 of mature and/or flowering plants, leaving 2/3 of mature plants and all juveniles in each population to continue to grow.
- 🌿 Always leave the taproot to re-sprout the following year.

\*The information here is believed to be accurate, but does not replace the laws that govern oshá harvest. Make sure you know and follow all state laws and regulations where you harvest oshá.



Leaves of *L. porteri*, Photo ©Al Schneider, <http://www.swcoloradowildflowers.com>

## HARVEST SEASON

While there is no official harvest season for oshá root, the harvest of roots should begin after the plant has had an opportunity to reproduce for the season, which is indicated by yellowing leaves. Optimal harvest timing will vary and is influenced by local environmental factors such as rainfall, as well as by market demand. Check with your buyers before harvesting.



*Ligusticum porteri*; Source: Barbara Alongi, Missouri Botanical Gardens, St. Louis, MO

# NATIONAL FOREST COLLECTION PERMITS

Permits to collect plants or plant material can be obtained at a USDA Forest Service District Offices. Permit types vary depending on collection needs; Forest Service personnel will help determine what type is appropriate.

Permit types and cost may vary within forests and regionally. For example, a permit to harvest oshá for resale in the San Juan National Forest is currently \$20 and allows for collection of 7 pounds with each pound thereafter \$3, while the minimum charge for small scale commercial and personal-use permit which includes other forest products is \$20 per permit (FS-2400-1). Higher minimum charges may occur, if necessary, to offset processing costs.

The permit system is used to collect fees and to authorize removal of forest products that are expected to have limited resource impacts. The permit allows legal removal of forest products from areas where such removal would be illegal without a permit. Collecting without a permit could result in steep fines.

Commercial and personal-use permits are not appropriate for:

- Product value over \$300.
- Time period of over 1 year.
- Special protection needs for aquatic, heritage resources, or threatened and endangered species habitat.

Forest Service units may also provide specifications such as:

- Specific locations where collection is not permitted, such as Research Natural Areas, Wilderness Areas, etc.
- Permit area map.
- List of rare plant species, look-alikes, or plant parts that may not be collected.
- Seasonal restrictions.
- Important safety practices related to collection.