



The Herb Society of America

2009 Promising Plant Profile

Withania somnifera



Photo courtesy of Theresa Mieseler

Common Name: ashwaganda, Indian ginseng, winter cherry

Family: Solanaceae

Genus: *Withania*

Specific Epithet: *somnifera*

Life cycle: perennial/annual

Zone: hardy to 15° F (-9° C), grown as an annual in zones 3-10

Flower color/Bloom time: small yellow flowers, red to orange fruit in husk

Growth/Habit/Form: shrub to 5 feet

Light requirements: full sun

Propagation: seed (dependent upon light for germination, sow seeds 6-8 weeks before the last frost date, indoors or in the greenhouse), cuttings, division

Use: medicinal, containers

Other details: TOP PARTS OF PLANT ARE TOXIC

Description/Cultivation: Native to India, this herb is an Ayurvedic (Indian) medicine herb which is sometimes called "Indian Ginseng." Ashwanga is a prolific grower and care needs to be taken with it so it does not become invasive. It is a multibranched shrub with tuberous roots. The red berry-like fruits are enclosed in papery coverings similar to that of Chinese lanterns. The plant is in leaf year round. **CAUTION:** this plant is toxic.



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Photo courtesy of Sandra Seiser

Disclaimer: Profiles are intended to provide a brief introduction to each herb. For additional information on uses, including medicinal contraindications, see the References list. The Herb Society of America can not advise, recommend, or prescribe herbs for medicinal use. Please consult a health care provider before pursuing any herbal treatments. Inclusion of vendor information does not indicate an endorsement by The Herb Society of America, and HSA can not guarantee availability of seeds/plants.

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