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Senecio aureus

[Synonyms : *Packera aurea*, *Senecio fastigianus*, *Senecio gracilis*, *Senecio purshianus*]

GOLDEN RAGWORT is a perennial. Native to south-eastern North America it has daisy-like brownish-centred, golden-yellow flowers.

It is also known as Cocash weed, Coughweed, Ebbens root, False valerian, Female regulator, Fireweed, *Goldenes Kreuzkraut* (German), Golden groundsel, Golden rod, Golden senecio, Groundsel, Ground swallow, Grundy swallow, Liferoot, Plunkum, Ragwort, Snakeroot, Squaw weed, Uncum, Uncum-piuncum, Waxweed, and Wild valerian.

Warning – can only be used by a qualified practitioner. Golden ragwort can cause liver disorders and lead to cirrhosis and death. It is known to be poisonous for livestock.

Aureus means ‘golden’ with reference to the flowers.

Before or during childbirth North American Indian women used to drink a tea made from the plant, and some tribes also used it to treat haemorrhages and bruising. The Cherokee tribe used it as a contraceptive and to cause sweating. They also prescribed it for treating some blood problems, heart disorders, kidney ailments and fever (the latter in both adults and children). However it appears to have attracted little medicinal interest elsewhere although the plant was used in a homoeopathic remedy in 1875 and was recommended by herbalists particularly for treating tuberculosis, female ailments and diarrhoea.

Now it is seldom used, not least because it has been implicated in cattle poisoning. There is however a very old remedy for genito-urinary problems that is still available on the United States market.