

Bencao Index

Herb flashcards

515 cards, one for every herb in the catalogue with its actions recorded. The front carries the pinyin name; the back carries the pharmaceutical Latin, the English name, the channels entered, and each action with its indications.

Printing

Print double-sided, flipped on the long edge, at 100% scale - not "fit to page", which would shift the backs out of line. Four cards to a sheet; cut along the dashed lines. Printed single-sided, the fronts and backs come out as alternating sheets in the same order.

Compiled from bencaoindex.com. The catalogue is a reference work and is knowingly incomplete; nothing here is a substitute for training or for a full materia medica, and none of it is medical advice.



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a wei

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ai ye

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ba dou

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ba ji tian

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Folium Artemisiae Argyi
Mugwort Leaf
Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Warms the channels and the womb, stops bleeding and calms the fetus

- Deficiency Cold causing heavy or long-lasting menstrual or uterine bleeding
- Threatened miscarriage with Cold signs, where the fetus is restless and there is bleeding and pain low in the abdomen
- Infertility from Cold in the womb

Disperses Cold and relieves pain

- Abdominal pain from Cold
- Painful periods of a Cold type

Dries Damp and stops itching

- Itchy skin complaints with Damp, washed externally with the decoction

Resolves Phlegm, stops cough and calms wheezing

- Wheezing, or cough with copious phlegm, using the extracted oil
- Cough and wheezing of a Cold type

Resina Ferulae
Chinese asafoetida
Stomach · Spleen

Regulates Qi, invigorates Blood and reduces food stagnation

- Swelling and palpable lumps in the abdomen from Blood stasis
- Abdominal distension with constipation
- Indigestion after overeating meat
- Pain from Cold in the Heart region and abdomen
- Distending pain of the chest and abdomen

Clears Heat

- Fever
- Dysentery and enteritis
- Malaria

Kills parasites

- Intestinal parasites, including roundworm

Resolves and expels Cold Phlegm

- Chronic bronchitis
- Croup and whooping cough (pertussis)

Regulates the uterus

- Amenorrhea
- Spasmodic menstrual pain

Radix Morindae Officinalis
Morinda Root
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies the Kidneys and strengthens Yang

- Kidney Yang deficiency with impotence, premature ejaculation or spermatorrhea, and infertility in men or women
- Frequent urination or incontinence of urine
- Irregular periods with clots
- A cold, weak and painful lower back
- Dull abdominal pain of a Cold type

Dispels Wind-Cold-Damp and strengthens the sinews and bones

- Wind-Cold-Damp Bi on a background of weak Kidneys and Liver: tight muscles in the lower back and legs, painful joints and restricted movement
- Muscle cramps or spasms
- Lower back pain with weak or wasting muscles

Fructus Crontonis
Croton Seed
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Warms, unblocks and drastically purges Cold accumulation

- Constipation with a full, distended and painful abdomen, from severe Cold building up internally, where a warm rather than a cold purgative is needed
- Food stagnation

Drives out water and reduces edema

- Ascites in late-stage schistosomiasis
- Ascites and severe edema

Breaks up obstructing Phlegm and benefits the throat

- Laboured breathing and wheezing, with marked fullness and distension of the chest and diaphragm
- Phlegm misting the orifices

Promotes healing of abscesses and ulcers and kills parasites (topical)

- Abscesses that have formed pus but have not yet broken open
- Severe or chronic ulcers
- Furuncles and warts

Stops diarrhea

- Diarrhea from Cold

Kills insects (topical)

ba jiao hui xiang

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ba jiao lian

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ba yue zha

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bai bian dou

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Rhizoma et Radix Dysosmae

dysosma
Lung · Liver

Clears toxic Heat, resolves Phlegm, dissipates nodules, breaks up stagnation and reduces swelling

- Carbuncles, furuncles, boils and sores
- Scrofula
- Tumors
- Snake bites and insect bites
- Cough
- Sore throat and acute tonsillitis
- Venereal disease
- Traumatic injury, internal or external
- Joint pain

Fructus Anisi Stellati

Chinese star anise
Stomach · Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Disperses Cold
Moves Qi and relieves pain

Semen Lablab Album

Lablab
Stomach · Spleen

Clears Summerheat and resolves Damp

- Summerheat-Damp upsetting digestion, with nausea and vomiting, loud gurgling in the bowels, and diarrhea or dysentery that may be severe or long-standing

Strengthens the Spleen and resolves Damp without drying

- Spleen deficiency
- Poor appetite, tiredness and lethargy with chronic diarrhea or loose stools
- Excessive vaginal discharge

Resolves toxicity

- Alcohol poisoning and food poisoning

Fructus Akebiae

Akebia Fruit
Stomach · Liver

Spreads Liver Qi, regulates Qi and relieves pain

- Constrained Liver Qi with pain in the chest and flanks
- Liver and Stomach disharmony with epigastric pain, or stomach ache brought on by emotional strain
- Hernial pain
- Indigestion and food stagnation

Expels Phlegm and dissipates masses

- Scrofula
- Lumps in the breast, or masses of the digestive tract, from stagnant Phlegm and Qi

Promotes urination and relieves restlessness

- Urinary dysfunction, including difficult urination or urination obstructed by stones
- Excessive thirst
- Dysentery
- Lower back pain

Invigorates Blood

- Blood stasis
- Painful periods
- Uterine tenesmus

Kills intestinal parasites

- Intestinal parasites

Resolves toxicity

- Toxic Heat

bai bu

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bai cao shuang

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bai dou kou

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bai guo

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Palvis Fumi Carbonisatus

Lung · Stomach · Liver

Stops bleeding and disperses accumulation

Coughing of blood, nosebleed or blood in the stool
Functional uterine bleeding
Abnormal vaginal discharge
Dysentery
Retained food
Ulcers in the mouth, on the tongue or in the throat
Skin disease and eczema

Radix Stemonae

Stemona Root

Lung

Moistens the Lungs and stops cough

Cough and wheezing, acute or chronic, especially from deficiency including Yin deficiency
Cough of any kind, Hot or Cold, Excess or deficient
Long-standing cough from deficiency, including the wasting cough seen in tuberculosis-type patterns
Bronchitis

Kills parasites and lice

Lice of the head or body, and fleas, applied to the skin
Pinworms, given as an enema held overnight
Spider bites, applied as a paste
Bacterial vaginosis, used as a wash
Parasitic itching of the skin, used externally

Semen Ginkgo

Ginkgo Nut

Lung · Kidney

Astringes the Lungs, expels Phlegm and calms wheezing

Wheezing and cough from Phlegm in the Lungs, especially long-standing cough or cough with copious sputum
Asthma from Lung Heat
Wheezing, breathlessness and chronic cough with plentiful sputum, from Heat, Phlegm or Lung deficiency; in Excess patterns it is paired with herbs that clear Heat and transform Phlegm, because it astringes rather than disperses
Loss of voice from deficient Lung Qi

Stabilises the Lower Jiao, eliminates Damp, stops discharge and restrains urination

Clear or yellow vaginal discharge and cloudy urine, from Lower Jiao deficiency or from Damp-Heat
Spermatorrhea
Frequent urination or urinary incontinence

Fructus Amomi Rotundus

Round Cardamon

Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Moves Qi, aromatically transforms Damp and strengthens the Stomach

Damp blocking the Middle Jiao, or Damp-Warmth, with a stuffy, oppressed chest, fullness below the heart, little appetite, a heavy sticky feeling and a thick greasy tongue coat

Warms the Middle Jiao and the Spleen, directs Qi downward and stops vomiting

Vomiting from Cold in the Spleen and Stomach, whether Deficiency Cold, Cold-Damp or food stagnation
Cold-Damp in the Stomach causing nausea and vomiting; classically counted among the best herbs when vomiting has a Cold cause
Rebellious Stomach Qi with belching and vomiting

bai he

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bai hua she

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bai hua she she cao

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bai ji

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Agkistrodon
Agkistrodon
Liver

Strongly unblocks the channels and collaterals and extinguishes Wind

- Chronic, stubborn Wind-Damp with numb, weak limbs and cramping of the sinews
- Painful Bi of long standing with numbness, joint pain in one fixed place and restricted movement

Dispels Wind from the skin

- Skin disease, numb skin, and rashes of any kind
- Itching, hives and tinea
- Chronic sores that will not heal

Extinguishes Wind, stops spasms and settles convulsions

- Spasms, tremors, convulsions or seizures of any kind, driven by internal Wind
- Tetanus
- After-effects of Wind-stroke: hemiplegia or paralysis, facial deviation, and loss of speech

Bulbus Lili
Lily Bulb
Lung · Heart

Nourishes Yin, moistens the Lungs, clears Heat and stops cough

- Dry cough, sore throat or blood in the sputum when the Lungs are dry, hot or short of Yin
- Long-standing consumptive cough from deficient Lung Qi and Yin: shortness of breath, scanty sputum that is hard to bring up or streaked with blood, night sweats and tidal fever

Clears Heat from the Heart and calms the Shen

- Lingering low-grade fever after a febrile illness, with restlessness, irritability and sleep disturbed by dreams
- Heart Fire
- Palpitations from insufficient Qi and Yin
- Bai He disease: unsettled mood and thinking, restlessness, a bitter taste, dark urine and a thin, slightly rapid pulse

Nourishes Stomach Yin and harmonises the Middle Jiao

- Dull, nagging stomach pain from Stomach Yin deficiency

Rhizoma Bletillae
Bletilla Rhizome
Lung · Stomach · Liver

Restrains leakage of Blood and stops bleeding

- Bleeding from the Lungs or Stomach: vomiting or coughing up blood, and nosebleed
- Lung abscess
- Bleeding from a traumatic injury, applied topically

Reduces swelling, generates flesh and heals ulcers (topical)

- Sores, ulcers and swellings, before or after they have broken open, applied externally
- Chapped or cracked skin
- Chronic wounds that are slow to heal

Nourishes the Lungs and resolves Phlegm

- Damage to the Lungs

Nourishes Yin, cools Heat and preserves Body Fluids

Herba Hedyotis Diffusae
Heydyotis
Large Intestine · Stomach · Small Intestine · Liver

Clears Heat, strongly resolves Fire toxicity and reduces abscesses (internal and topical)

- Intestinal abscess, including acute appendicitis
- Toxic sores, boils, ulcers and swellings (Chuang Yang)
- Snakebite
- Cancers; commonly added to formulas for masses of the stomach, oesophagus and intestines, as a prescribing tradition rather than proven benefit
- Blisters and ichthyosis, applied topically

Clears Heat, drains Damp and promotes urination

- Lin syndrome, with hot and painful urination from Damp-Heat
- Jaundice from Damp-Heat

bai ji li

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bai jiang cao

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bai jie zi

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bai lian

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Herba Patriniae
Patrina
Large Intestine · Stomach · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, expels pus, eliminates Phlegm and reduces abscesses (internal and topical)

- Fire toxin disorders such as intestinal abscess (including appendicitis-type presentations), furuncles, carbuncles and erysipelas
- Lung abscess and toxicity in the Lungs
- Heat in the reproductive organs, including pelvic inflammatory presentations
- Sores and swellings from Fire toxin (Chuang Yang)

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis, resolves bruising and relieves pain

- Blood stasis with Heat, obstructing and causing pain, chiefly in the abdomen or chest
- Abdominal pain after childbirth or after surgery
- Painful periods, and endometriosis-type presentations

Fructus Tribuli
Caltrop Fruit
Liver

Calms the Liver and anchors Yang

- Rising Liver Yang or Liver Fire with headache, dizziness or vertigo, blurred vision and a bitter taste
- Hypertension

Spreads Liver Qi and disperses stagnation and clumping

- Constrained Liver Qi with fullness, distension and pain in the chest and flanks, irregular periods, or too little breast milk

Dispels Wind-Heat and brightens the eyes

- Red, swollen, painful or itchy eyes
- Excessive tearing and sensitivity to light
- Superficial obstruction of vision

Dispels Wind and stops itching

- Strongly itching skin lesions of any kind, such as hives, eczema or neurodermatitis, including itch from Wind with Blood deficiency
- Vitiligo, for which it may be used on its own

Extinguishes Liver Wind

- Liver Wind

Radix Ampelopsis
Ampelopsis
Stomach · Heart · Liver

Drains Fire, resolves toxicity, eliminates Damp, dissipates lumps and reduces swelling

- Sores and abscesses from Fire toxicity (Chuang Yang), including the early stage before pus forms; may be used on its own
- Carbuncles and swellings caused by Heat and toxins

Relieves pain, heals wounds and generates flesh

- Wounds, especially ulcers that fail to heal
- Burns and scalds, and red or broken skin, applied externally

Semen Sinapis
White Mustard Seed
Lung

Warms the Lungs, regulates Qi and expels Phlegm

- Cold-Phlegm build-up, often chronic, with cough and wheezing, plenty of thin white or clear sputum, and a distended, tight chest with pain in the chest and ribs
- Pain in the upper chest or at the diaphragm where Cold-Phlegm obstructs
- Breathlessness

Moves Qi, dissipates nodules, unblocks the collaterals and relieves pain

- Phlegm-Damp lodged in the channels, with numb limbs
- Cold-Phlegm blocking the channels, with body aches and joint pain
- Yin-type flat abscesses and boils, and tuberculosis of the bone
- Spreading sores and bed sores
- Scrofula and other Phlegm nodules or masses

bai mao gen

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bai mu er

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bai qian

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bai shao

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Tremella
Tremella Fruiting Body
Lung · Stomach

Nourishes Stomach Yin, generates Fluids and moistens the Lungs

Yin deficiency with Heat, sometimes with Yang rising: wasting, and heat in the palms, soles and chest (five-centre heat)

Nourishes Lung Yin

Dry cough from Lung Yin deficiency or Lung Heat, with little sputum that is hard to bring up and may carry streaks of blood

Rhizoma Imperatae
Imperata Rhizoma
Lung · Stomach · Small Intestine · Bladder

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Heat in the Blood causing nosebleed, blood in the urine, or vomiting or coughing up blood

Clears Heat and promotes urination

Lin syndrome, with hot, painful or difficult urination
Edema and difficult urination in Heat patterns
Jaundice from Damp-Heat
Simple difficulty passing urine, for which it is gentle enough to use alone

Clears Heat from the Lungs and Stomach

Stomach Heat with nausea, vomiting, thirst and irritability
Lung Heat with cough and wheezing

Radix Paeoniae Alba
peony
Spleen · Liver

Nourishes Blood and regulates menstruation

Liver Blood deficiency showing as irregular periods, uterine bleeding or vaginal discharge, with a pale dull complexion and brittle nails
Painful periods, and disorders of pregnancy or the postpartum period, from Blood deficiency weakening the Ren and Chong vessels
Anemia
Premenstrual tension with breast distension

Preserves Yin and harmonises the Ying and Wei

Night sweats and spontaneous sweating from Yin deficiency
Sweating from collapse of Yin
Ying and Wei out of harmony, with sweating that does not resolve the exterior condition
Liver and Spleen disharmony

Calms Liver Yang and extinguishes Liver Wind

Yang of the Liver rising on a base of Yin and Blood deficiency: headache, dizziness and vertigo, ringing in the ears, redness of the eyes and face, and irritability
Internal Wind from depleted Blood and Yin, with tremor, twitching and muscle spasm, progressing to convulsions in severe cases
Liver Qi constraint with Liver Yang rising

Softens the Liver and relieves pain

Cramping and spasm of the sinews and muscles, including the calves
Hypochondriac, intercostal or abdominal pain from Liver and Spleen disharmony
Abdominal pain, borborygmus and diarrhea
Painful Bi with spasm, from Blood deficiency
Dysentery with tenesmus

Rhizoma Cynanchi Stauntonii
Cynanchum Root And Rhizome
Lung

Directs rebellious Qi downward, expels Phlegm and stops cough

Cough and wheezing with plenty of sputum that is hard to clear, when Lung Qi is blocked and stagnant
Phlegm obstructing the chest
Cough following an invasion of Wind-Cold
Cough and breathlessness in Excess-type respiratory disorders, whether the pattern is Hot or Cold; its pungent warmth does not dry the fluids as many Phlegm-expelling herbs do

bai tou weng

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bai wei

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bai xian pi

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bai ying

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Radix Cynanchi Atrati
Cynanchi Root
Lung · Stomach · Kidney

Cools the Blood and clears Deficiency Heat

- Heat at the Ying and Blood levels
- Fever from Yin deficiency
- Summerheat fever that persists in children
- Fever after childbirth, its most common use
- Low-grade fever lingering after a warm febrile disease has injured the Blood or Yin

Promotes urination

- Painful, difficult urination with heat or blood in the urine, particularly around childbirth

Clears Heat toxin and treats sores

- Toxic sores and abscesses
- A swollen, sore throat
- Snakebite
- Used internally or topically for these, though its action here is mild

Radix Pulsatillae
anemone
Large Intestine · Stomach

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxicity and cools the Blood to stop dysentery

- Diarrhea or dysentery from Damp-Heat in the Intestines and Stomach, with abdominal pain, straining, and pus or blood in the stools
- Dysentery from toxic Fire, including bacterial and amoebic presentations
- Blood in the stool

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

- Nosebleed or bleeding hemorrhoids from Heat in the Blood

Clears Damp-Heat and stops itching (external use)

- Applied as a douche or external wash for itching and discharge from Damp-Heat, trichomonal vaginitis among them

Herba Solani Lyrati
nightshade

Clears Heat, dispels Damp and resolves toxicity

- Malaria
- Jaundice
- Furuncles and erysipelas
- Ear pain with pus and blood

Eliminates Wind and promotes urination

- Wandering joint pain and rheumatic pain
- Ascites and edema
- Lin syndrome, including painful urination with blood
- Lower abdominal pain

Regulates Qi, invigorates Blood and dispels Phlegm

- Cancers and tumors
- Swellings and lumps
- Lower abdominal pain from Qi stagnation
- Abdominal pain in children from roundworm

Cortex Dictami
cortex of Chinese dittany root
Stomach · Spleen

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxicity, expels Wind and dries Damp

- Wind-Heat or Damp-Heat skin lesions (carbuncles, rashes) that ooze yellow fluid or much pus, with damp, itchy skin
- Damp-Heat eruptions, including scabies-type lesions and weeping eczema-like rashes
- Rubella and other Wind-Heat rashes whose itch moves about, comes and goes, or spreads
- Damp-Heat Bi with red, swollen and painful joints
- Jaundice from Damp-Heat in the Liver and Gallbladder

Clears Damp-Heat and stops itching

- Itching of the vulva and vagina

bai zhi

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bai zhu

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bai zi ren

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ban bian lian

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Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae

ovate atractylodes rhizome
Stomach · Spleen

Tonifies the Spleen and augments Qi

Deficient Qi of the Spleen and Stomach, with loose stools or diarrhea, tiredness, shortness of breath, a sallow face and poor appetite
Spleen Yang failing to rise

Dries Damp and promotes water metabolism

Damp in the Spleen, or accumulated fluids disturbing digestion
Edema with scanty urine when a deficient Spleen cannot transform and transport fluids
Tan Yin (Phlegm-fluids), masses and swelling
Damp painful obstruction, as a supporting herb

Secures the Exterior and stops sweating

Spontaneous sweating from Qi deficiency, with weak Wei Qi
Other kinds of sweating, when combined with suitable herbs

Calms the fetus

Restless fetus when weak Spleen Qi fails to nourish it
Other restless fetus patterns, with suitable herbs

Radix Angelicae Dahuricae

Angelica Root
Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Expels Wind, dispels Cold and Damp, opens the nasal passages and relieves pain

Exterior Wind-Cold, particularly with headache
External Wind invading the Yang Ming channels of the head, with frontal or supraorbital headache and sinus congestion
Pain above the eye socket, toothache and arthritis
Nasal congestion and sinus headache; a first-choice herb, traditionally paired with Cang Er Zi and Xin Yi Hua

Reduces swelling, resolves toxicity and expels pus

Superficial sores, boils and carbuncles in their early stage
Itching of the skin

Dries Damp and stops discharge

Vaginal discharge from Cold-Damp in the Lower Jiao
Diarrhea

Herba Lobeliae Chinensis

Chinese Lobelia
Lung · Heart · Small Intestine

Promotes urination, reduces edema and regulates the water passages

Edema, especially floating edema
Ascites, including ascites from late-stage schistosomiasis or end-stage liver cirrhosis

Clears Heat, cools the Blood and resolves toxicity (internal and topical)

Snakebite, and stings from wasps, bees, scorpions and centipedes, taken by mouth and applied to the site; the herb of choice for bites and stings
Heat in the Blood
Tonsillitis and other Fire toxin disorders
Sores, ulcers, swellings, eczema, shingles and fungal skin infections from Heat and toxin

Semen Platycladi

Arborvitae Seed
Large Intestine · Heart · Kidney

Nourishes the Heart and calms the Shen

Deficient Heart Blood and Yin with palpitations, anxiety, insomnia and poor memory
Night terrors in children; may be used alone

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

Constipation from dry bowels rather than Excess obstruction, due to Blood and Yin deficiency, particularly in older or debilitated people, after childbirth or after a long illness

Stops sweating from Yin deficiency

Night sweats from Yin deficiency

Nourishes Essence

ban lan gen

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ban zhi lian

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bei dou gen

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bei sha shen

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Herba Scutellariae Barbatae

Barbat Skullcap

Lung · Stomach · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxicity, invigorates Blood and reduces swelling

- Boils, abscesses and toxic sores (Chuang Yang)
- Appendicitis and lung abscess
- Snakebite and insect bites, often with the fresh plant crushed and applied as well as taken by mouth
- Swelling from traumatic injury

Used for cancers and liver disease in modern Chinese practice

- Various cancers (a modern prescribing practice, not a proven treatment)
- Hepatitis
- Liver cirrhosis

Promotes urination and reduces edema

- Edema from Damp-Heat
- Ascites in cirrhosis of the liver

Mildly dispels Blood stasis and stops bleeding

- Bleeding from injury, vomiting of blood, or nosebleed
- Painful urination with blood in the urine

Radix Isatidis

Isatis Root

Lung · Stomach · Heart

Drains Heat, resolves Fire toxicity, cools the Blood and benefits the throat

- Warm febrile disease
- Epidemic febrile illness, including influenza-like and meningitis-like patterns, and encephalitis B
- Measles and mumps
- A painful, swollen throat from seasonal toxic pathogens, and upper respiratory infections
- Erysipelas and other Heat toxin eruptions of the skin
- Damp-Heat jaundice and infectious hepatitis
- Heat in the Gallbladder
- Heat in the Blood, including Heat toxin at the Blood level

Radix Glehniae

Glehnia Root

Lung · Stomach

Nourishes Lung Yin and clears Lung Heat

- Dry, hacking cough without phlegm, with a dry, scratchy throat and a hoarse voice
- Occasional scanty sputum with blood in it, when Heat injures the Lung collaterals

Nourishes Stomach Yin and generates Fluids

- Stomach Yin deficiency with thirst, dry mouth and poor appetite; the tongue is red and dry with a scanty or absent coat
- Damaged Fluids following a febrile illness

Rhizoma Menisperm

asiatic moonseed rhizome

Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity

- Wind-Heat toxin in the Lungs and Stomach, as in sore throat, cough or mumps
- Snakebite

Dispels Wind and relieves pain

- Wind-Damp Bi

Resolves Damp and reduces swelling

- Damp-Heat

bi ba

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bi chen qie

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bi ma zi

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bi qi

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Fructus Litseae
cubeb fruit

Warms the Middle Jiao and relieves pain

Cold in the Spleen and Stomach with distension and pain of the epigastrium and abdomen

Descends rebellious Stomach Qi and stops vomiting

Vomiting and hiccups of a Cold type

Strengthens digestion and appetite

Poor appetite from Cold in the Middle Jiao

Warms the Kidneys and dispels Cold from the Bladder

Kidney Yang deficiency with Cold in the Bladder: cold, painful dribbling urination, frequent and either clear or cloudy

Fructus Piperis Longi
Long Pepper Fruit
Large Intestine · Stomach

Warms the Middle Jiao, disperses Cold, directs Qi downward and relieves pain

Abdominal pain with nausea, vomiting, hiccups, belching, acid reflux and poor appetite, where Cold has congealed and stagnated the Qi of the epigastrium and abdomen
Diarrhea or dysentery when Cold has settled in the Intestines, Spleen and Stomach
Stomach Cold
Nausea and vomiting of a Cold type

Relieves toothache (topical)

Toothache, with the powdered fruit placed on or beside the painful tooth

Rhizoma Eleocharitis
waternut
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Transforms Phlegm and reduces accumulations

Cough from Phlegm-Heat
Scrofula and other Phlegm nodules

Clears Heat from the Lungs and Stomach, generates Fluids and relieves thirst

Heat in the Lungs and Stomach causing thirst and constipation
Diabetes
Jaundice
Painful urinary dysfunction
Red eyes, and a sore, swollen throat
Warm pathogen diseases, for which it is often used

Cools the Blood, resolves toxicity, moves the bowels and improves appetite

Constipation
Conjunctivitis and corneal opacity
Hard masses
Indigestion

Semen Ricini
castor seed
Lung · Large Intestine · Kidney · Liver

Reduces swelling, resolves toxicity, moistens the Intestines and promotes bowel movement

Constipation with dry stools
Furuncles, ulcers and suppurating skin infections
Sore throat
Swellings and scrofula
Facial paralysis

bi xie

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bian xu

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bie jia

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bing lang

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Herba Polygoni Avicularis
Knotgrass
Bladder

Drains Damp-Heat from the Bladder, promotes urination and relieves painful urinary dysfunction

Damp-Heat Lin syndrome, including Heat Lin: burning, painful, frequent or dribbling urination with scanty or cloudy urine
Jaundice from Damp-Heat affecting the Liver and Gallbladder, in combination with other herbs

Kills parasites and stops itching

Intestinal parasites: tapeworm, hookworm, pinworm and roundworm
Itchy Damp skin lesions, including tinea, eczema and oozing sores, often washed with the decoction externally

Rhizoma Dioscoreae Hypoglaucae
hypoglauous collett yam rhizome
Stomach · Bladder · Liver

Separates the clear from the turbid and resolves turbid Damp in the Lower Jiao

Cloudy urine or vaginal discharge from turbid Damp in the Lower Jiao
Damp-Heat or deficiency Heat

Separates the clear from the turbid

Turbid Damp in the Lower Jiao with cloudy or milky urine, blood-tinged urine, or vaginal discharge
Lower Jiao Damp-Heat: urination that is frequent, burning and painful, with a red tongue and a greasy yellow coat
Yang deficiency: the same turbid urine or discharge but with no burning or pain

Expels Wind-Damp, relaxes the sinews and unblocks the Luo channels

Low back pain, aching muscles, and legs that are numb or stiff, in Bi from Wind-Damp or Damp-Heat (a mild action)

Expels Wind-Damp and Damp-Heat, relaxes the sinews and unblocks the collaterals

Bi pain, where its effect is mild, including low back pain and legs that are stiff and numb, especially at the knees
Muscle aches

Clears Damp-Heat from the skin

Damp-Heat skin lesions such as eczema and pustular sores

Resolves Damp-Heat in the skin

Eczema and pustular sores from Damp-Heat

Semen Arecae
Aracea
Large Intestine · Stomach

Kills parasites

Many intestinal parasites, including fasciolopsis, pinworm, roundworm, hookworm, threadworm and blood flukes
Tapeworm, against which it works best
Its downward-draining action carries the dead parasites out of the bowel

Moves Qi, reduces accumulation, drains downward and unblocks the bowels

Food and Qi stagnation with abdominal distension and fullness, and constipation or diarrhea with tenesmus
Chest oppression and fullness, with wheezing, phlegm or belching
Organ enlargement, benign cysts or masses, and ascites, within combination formulas

Promotes urination

Damp leg Qi (swollen legs) and edema of an Excess type

Treats malarial disorders

Malarial disorders

Relieves nausea

Nausea

Carapax Trionycis
Chinese Soft Shelled Turtle Shel
Spleen · Liver

Nourishes Yin and anchors Yang

Yin deficiency with fever, night sweats, steaming bones or consumption
Yang floating upward for want of Yin, with tidal fever, heat in the five centres, dizziness and irritability
Internal stirring of Liver Wind, with tremor, when depleted Yin cannot hold it

Clears deficiency Heat and vents Heat from the Yin level

Deep, low-grade fever in the afternoon or night from long-standing Yin depletion
Heat lingering at the Yin level late in a febrile disease: fever that eases by morning and comes back at night without sweating

Invigorates Blood, promotes menstruation, softens hardness and dissipates nodules

Accumulations in the chest and flanks with pain and absent periods
Heavy periods from Heat in the Blood
Malarial disorders with palpable masses, including an enlarged spleen after chronic intermittent fevers
Palpable abdominal masses and glandular swellings
Amenorrhea from long-standing Blood stasis

Anchors heavily, descends, and unblocks the Blood vessels

Disorders in children from internal clumping

bing pian

Bencao Index

bing tang

Bencao Index

bo he

Bencao Index

bu gu zhi

Bencao Index

Lung · Spleen

Strengthens the Spleen and harmonises the Stomach

Qi deficiency of the Spleen and Stomach
Tiredness and poor appetite from Qi deficiency, as a mild food-therapy tonic; too gentle to lead a formula where deficiency is marked

Moistens the Lungs and stops cough

Dry cough from Lung dryness, with a dry, scratchy throat
Little sputum, sometimes streaked with blood

Harmonises and improves the taste of formulas

Bitter or acrid formulas that need sweetening and smoothing, without adding Heat

Borneolum

Borneol
Lung · Spleen · Heart

Aromatically opens the orifices, revives the Shen and unblocks closed disorders

Fainting, convulsions or clouded consciousness
Unconsciousness of the closed type during a febrile illness with Heat, paired with Niu Huang and She Xiang

Clears Heat, drains Fire, resolves toxicity, brightens the eyes and removes superficial visual obstruction

Headache, mouth sores, and red, swollen eyes or superficial visual obstruction, caused by Heat

Clears Heat, relieves pain, dissipates nodules and stops itching (mostly topical)

A sore, swollen throat, applied topically
Sores of the mouth and gums, including canker sores
Scabies, sores and other skin disease
Eye complaints such as light sensitivity, heavy tearing, or red and painful eyes
Earache

Reduces swelling and promotes healing of sores

Carbuncles, sores that will not heal, and traumatic injury, applied externally

Fructus Psoraleae

Psoralea Fruit
Spleen · Kidney

Tonifies the Kidneys, strengthens Yang, secures Jing and holds the urine

Deficient Kidney Yang causing impotence or premature ejaculation, cold limbs, and a lower back and knees that are cold and painful
Spermatorrhea, frequent urination, incontinence or bedwetting from deficient Kidney Yang and Essence
Kidneys failing to grasp Qi
Declining Ming Men Fire

Warms and tonifies Spleen Yang and stops diarrhea

Diarrhea from Spleen Yang deficiency with gurgling bowels, abdominal pain, bloating and poor appetite, particularly early-morning (fifth-watch) diarrhea
Combined Spleen and Kidney Yang deficiency, for which it is best suited

Treats vitiligo (topical)

Vitiligo, applied externally after soaking in wine

Herba Menthae

field mint
Lung · Liver

Disperses Wind-Heat, clears the head and eyes and benefits the throat

Common cold or the early stage of a febrile illness from Wind-Heat: fever, headache, cough and a sore throat
Wind-Heat rising to the head, with red and painful eyes, headache and a sore, swollen throat

Vents rashes

Rashes in their early stage, or slow to come out fully, such as measles

Spreads constrained Liver Qi

Liver Qi constraint with pressure or distension in the chest and flanks, emotional upset, and gynaecological complaints

Expels turbid filth

Summertime stomach upset after contact with unclean Qi: vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain, with a thick, greasy, yellow tongue coat

can sha

Bencao Index

cang er zi

Bencao Index

cang zhu

Bencao Index

cao dou kou

Bencao Index

Fructus Xanthii
cockleburr fruit
Lung

Disperses Wind-Damp, opens the nasal passages and relieves pain

Blocked nose, rhinitis or sinusitis with thick, turbid discharge and loss of smell
Severe sinus headache that can radiate to the neck or the back of the head

Disperses Wind and dispels Damp

Wind-Damp Bi with muscle and joint pain, spasms or cramps
Itchy skin disorders and rashes from Wind-Damp

Dispels exterior Wind

Splitting headache at the back of the head from Wind-Cold, as a supporting herb

Faeces Bombycis
Silkworm Feces
Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Dispels Wind and eliminates Damp

Wind-Damp Bi, with aching muscles and pain in the limbs
Wind-Damp skin rashes, itchy skin and eczema

Harmonises the Stomach and transforms turbid Damp

Sudden turmoil disorder (huo luan) from turbid Damp blocking the Middle Jiao: vomiting and diarrhea, cramping abdominal pain, gurgling bowels and spasms of the calves

Semen Alpiniae Katsumadai
Katsumada'S Galangal Seeds
Stomach · Spleen

Aromatically dries Damp, warms the Middle Jiao, directs Stomach Qi down to stop vomiting, and strengthens the Spleen

Vomiting and diarrhea with a full, distended, aching epigastrium and abdomen, from Cold-Damp in the Spleen and Stomach

Damp with Cold rather than Heat: an abdomen that feels cold, full and achy, vomiting of clear fluid (not sour or foul matter), a sluggish appetite, loose stools and a white greasy tongue coat

A Spleen dulled by Damp, which its aromatic quality rouses as well as dries

Rhizoma Atractylodis
Atractylodes Rhizome
Stomach · Spleen

Strongly dries Damp and strengthens the Spleen

Damp blocking the Middle Jiao and hampering the Spleen's transforming and transporting, with a thick greasy tongue coat, poor appetite, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea or loose stools, a distended and pressured epigastrium, tiredness and heaviness of the body

Induces sweating, releases the Exterior and expels Wind-Damp

Wind-Damp or Wind-Cold-Damp with chills, fever and no sweating, headache, body aches and a blocked nose
Painful limbs from Wind-Damp Bi

Dries Damp in the Lower Jiao

Downward-pouring Damp-Heat causing Leg Qi, vaginal discharge, swollen and aching joints, or certain atrophy disorders, together with Heat-clearing herbs

Improves vision

Night blindness, or failing vision with a gritty feeling in the eyes

ce bai ye

Bencao Index

chai hu

Bencao Index

chan su

Bencao Index

chan tui

Bencao Index

Radix Bupleuri
Bupleurum
Pericardium · San Jiao · Gallbladder · Liver

Harmonises Shao Yang and reduces fever
Shao Yang pattern: chills alternating with fever, a bitter taste, fullness in the chest, pain along the flanks, dizziness and ringing in the ears, irritability, and nausea or vomiting
Deficiency Heat, as a supporting herb
Gallbladder Fire

Spreads Liver Qi and relieves constraint
Constrained Liver Qi with chest and flank pain, dizziness, emotional strain and irregular periods
Liver overacting on the Spleen and Stomach, with epigastric and rib-side pain, a tight chest, bloating, nausea and poor digestion
Liver and Gallbladder disharmony

Raises the Clear Yang of the Middle Jiao
Sinking Qi of the Spleen and Stomach with prolapse of the rectum or uterus, hemorrhoids, long-standing diarrhea or exhaustion
Vaginal discharge or bleeding when Qi fails to lift and hold

Disperses Wind-Heat and clears Phlegm congestion
Wind-Heat invasion

Cacumen Platycladi
arborvitae
Lung · Large Intestine · Liver

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding
Bleeding from Heat in the Blood: vomiting or coughing blood, nosebleed, bleeding gums, blood in the stool or urine, bloody dysentery, and heavy menstrual or uterine bleeding
Bleeding from injury
Bleeding in Cold patterns, when combined with suitable herbs

Stops cough and wheezing and expels Phlegm
Cough from Lung Heat
Phlegm-Heat with thick, sticky sputum that is hard to bring up, especially when streaked with blood

Promotes healing of burns and generates flesh (topical)
Burns in their early stage over a moderate area, applied as a powder or paste
Bleeding wounds, applied externally

Promotes hair growth (topical)
Hair loss or early greying, rubbing a tincture made with alcohol into the scalp

Clears Damp-Heat
Vaginal discharge from Damp-Heat

Dispels Wind-Damp
Wind-Damp Bi

Periostracum Cicadae
Cicada Molting
Lung · Liver

Disperses Wind-Heat
Hoarseness or loss of voice with a swollen, sore throat, in exterior Wind-Heat or an upper respiratory infection

Vents rashes and relieves itching
Measles in its early stage, when the rash has not fully come out

Brightens the eyes and removes superficial visual obstruction
Red, painful, swollen eyes or blurred vision from Wind-Heat
Liver Yang rising on a base of Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency

Extinguishes Liver Wind and stops spasms
Fever in children in which Liver Wind brings convulsions, spasms, delirium, fright, insomnia or night terrors
Tetanus, within traditional formulas

Venenum Bufonis
Toad Venom
Stomach · Heart

Resolves toxicity, reduces swelling and relieves pain
Swelling of the throat from toxic Phlegm-Heat
Swellings, sores, boils, carbuncles and ulcers, applied topically or taken internally
Painful sores and swellings, as a strong local painkiller

Expels Summerheat and Damp, opens the orifices, revives consciousness and tonifies the Heart
Sudden loss of consciousness with abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhea, from Summerheat with heavy turbidity
Sudden collapse or heatstroke-type closed patterns
Yang deficiency of the Heart and Kidneys
Devastated Yang
Fluid congestion of the Heart and Lungs
Stagnant Lung Qi with Cold Phlegm

Attacks toxins, reduces swelling, resists cancer and calms panic
Various types of cancer

chang shan

Bencao Index

che qian zi

Bencao Index

chen pi

Bencao Index

chen xiang

Bencao Index

Semen Plantaginis

plantago seed

Lung · Bladder · Kidney · Liver

Promotes urination, drains Damp and clears Damp-Heat

Damp-Heat, usually in the Lower Jiao, with edema and painful urinary dysfunction

Lin syndrome: urination that is painful, difficult or dribbling, or turbid and burning from Damp-Heat in the Bladder

Vaginal discharge from Damp-Heat

Promotes urination to firm the stool

Diarrhea from Damp-Heat

Summerheat with Damp

Clears Liver Heat and brightens the eyes

Dry eyes and weakening sight from Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency, combined with herbs that nourish the Liver and Kidneys

Light sensitivity with red, swollen and painful eyes, from Heat in the Liver channel

Clears the Lungs, expels Phlegm and stops cough

Cough from Lung Heat with plenty of yellow phlegm

Radix Dichroae

Dichroa Root

Lung · Heart · Liver

Checks malarial disorders and kills parasites

Malarial disorders with cycles of chills and fever, from a pathogen lodged half in the exterior and half in the interior; a specific herb against the malaria parasite

Induces vomiting to expel Phlegm

Phlegm in the chest

Tan Yin (Phlegm-fluids) gathered in the chest and

diaphragm, with fullness of the chest and epigastrium

Aquilariae Lingum Resinatum

aloeswood

Stomach · Spleen · Kidney

Moves Qi and relieves pain

Qi stagnation with distension, pain or pressure in the chest, epigastrium or abdomen, particularly of a Cold, deficient type or with Blood stasis

Directs rebellious Qi downward, warms the Middle Jiao and the Spleen and Stomach, dispels Cold and stops vomiting

Wheezing from rebellious Qi, whether Excess or deficient, including wheezing with a Cold, deficient element

Chronic nausea, vomiting, belching or hiccups from

Deficiency Cold of the Spleen and Stomach

Warms the Kidneys and helps them grasp Qi

Asthma and wheezing when the Kidneys fail to grasp Qi, with breathing in harder than breathing out

A cold, sore and weak lower back and knees

Spermatorrhea in men

Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae

Aged Tangerine Peel

Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Regulates Qi, harmonises the Middle Jiao and eases the diaphragm

Qi stagnation of the Spleen and Stomach: a full, distended or bloated epigastrium or abdomen, stomach ache, belching, poor appetite, and nausea or vomiting from rebellious Stomach Qi

Dries Damp and transforms Phlegm

Cough with plentiful sticky sputum and a stifling feeling in the chest or diaphragm, when Phlegm-Damp blocks the Lungs

Phlegm and Qi collecting in the Lungs from Spleen

deficiency, with wheezing and breathlessness

Turbid Damp obstructing the Middle Jiao: chest oppression, abdominal distension, poor appetite, tiredness, loose stools or diarrhea, and a thick greasy tongue coat

Prevents stagnation from tonic herbs

Stagnation brought on by rich tonic herbs

Directs Qi downward

Rebellious Qi

chi shao

Bencao Index

chi shi zhi

Bencao Index

chi xiao dou

Bencao Index

chong lou

Bencao Index

Halloysitum Rubrum
Halloysite
Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen

Astringes the Intestines, supplements Qi and stops diarrhea

- Unremitting chronic diarrhea, often with undigested food, from Deficiency Cold or Qi deficiency with Cold, with lethargy, weakness and dull abdominal pain
- Chronic dysentery, with blood and mucus passed in the stool
- Prolapse of the rectum when Spleen Qi is weak

Contains the Blood and stops bleeding

- Bleeding from Cold in the Lower Jiao with Kidney and Liver deficiency: uterine bleeding, heavy periods, spotting between periods, blood in the stool, or a bleeding prolapsed rectum
- Bleeding from injury, applied topically

Generates flesh and promotes healing of wounds and sores (topical)

- Wounds
- Long-standing, non-healing ulcers
- Weeping, damp sores
- Prolapsed rectum

Radix Paeoniae Rubra
Red Peony Root
Spleen · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis and relieves pain

- Blood stasis with painful or absent periods, abdominal pain, fixed abdominal masses or varicose veins
- Bruising, pain and swelling after injury, internal or external
- Acute inflammation, rashes and abscesses with stagnation

Clears Heat and cools the Blood

- Heat at the Blood level with fever, a purple or red-purple tongue, skin macules and bleeding
- Gynaecological disorders from Blood Heat, such as painful or heavy periods

Clears Liver Fire and relieves eye pain

- Rising Liver Fire with red, swollen and painful eyes

Reduces swelling from sores and abscesses

- Abscesses and boils in their early stage

Rhizoma Paridis
Paris Rhizome
Liver

Drains Heat, resolves Fire toxicity, reduces swelling and inflammation, and relieves pain

- Toxic sores and abscesses (Chuang Yang)
- Snakebite
- Bleeding from injury, and pain from stasis
- Swelling and inflammation
- Swelling and pain of the chest and throat

Extinguishes Liver Wind and settles tremors

- Liver Wind, as in childhood convulsions and seizures

Semen Phaseoli
Adzuki Bean
Heart · Small Intestine

Promotes urination and reduces edema

- Edema with a swollen, full abdomen and difficult urination
- Ascites
- Leg Qi with edema from water accumulation

Clears Damp-Heat and relieves jaundice

- Jaundice of a mild, Damp-Heat type

Disperses Blood stasis, reduces swelling, resolves Fire toxicity and drains pus

- Sores, carbuncles and furuncles (Chuang Yang), taken internally or applied as a paste of the powdered bean
- Erysipelas and toxic swellings

chong wei zi

Bencao Index

chuan bei mu

Bencao Index

chuan jiao

Bencao Index

chuan lian zi

Bencao Index

Bulbus Fritillariae Cirrhosae

Sichuan Fritillaria Bulb

Lung · Heart

Clears Heat, transforms Phlegm, moistens the Lungs and stops cough

Long-standing dry cough from Yin deficiency with Deficiency Fire: little sputum that is hard to bring up and may be streaked with blood, with a dry mouth and throat
Cough complicated by Qi stagnation, with poor appetite and an oppressed, blocked feeling in the chest and abdomen

Clears Heat and dissipates nodules

Nodules and swellings from Phlegm-Heat or Phlegm-Fire, such as scrofula and goiter
Toxic sores and swellings (Chuang Yung)
Abscess of the Lung or breast

Fructus Leonuri

Leonurus Fruit

Spleen · Liver

Invigorates Blood and regulates menstruation

Irregular or painful periods
Amenorrhea, or pain in the abdomen after childbirth, from Blood stasis

Clears and cools the Liver and brightens the eyes

Headache from Liver Heat
Red, swollen and painful eyes, nebulae or conjunctivitis from Liver Heat
Pterygium

Fructus Toosendan

Sichuan chinaberry

Stomach · Small Intestine · Bladder · Liver

Spreads Liver Qi, relieves stagnation and stops pain

Stagnant Liver Qi causing pain in the chest, flanks and upper abdomen
Distension and pain from disharmony of the Liver and Stomach
Bulging (Shan) disorders and hernial pain, often with the processed herb

Clears Liver Heat and leads Heat downward and out

Qi stagnation that has generated Heat, with irritability, a short temper, insomnia, and a red face and eyes; its cold nature makes this its best use
Cold patterns as well, when paired with appropriate herbs, because it is so effective

Kills parasites and stops pain

Roundworm, hookworm and tapeworm
Abdominal pain from intestinal parasites
Skin disorders of the scalp, dusted on as a powder

Kills fungus

Fungal infection of the scalp, applied as a paste

Warms the Middle Jiao, relieves pain and stops diarrhea

Deficiency Cold of the Spleen and Stomach with a cold abdomen, pain in the epigastrium and abdomen, and diarrhea
Toothache, traditionally treated by applying the herb locally

Kills parasites

Roundworm and other intestinal parasites with abdominal pain and vomiting

Relieves itching (external use)

Itchy or parasitic skin conditions such as eczema and pruritus, applied to the skin

chuan mu tong

Bencao Index

chuan niu xi

Bencao Index

chuan shan jia

Bencao Index

chuan shan long

Bencao Index

Radix Cyathulae
Cyathula Root
Kidney · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis and unblocks menstruation

- Painful or absent periods from congealed Blood
- Lochia retained after childbirth, with abdominal pain
- Palpable masses
- Pain and bruising after traumatic injury

Expels Wind-Damp, unblocks the channels and benefits the joints

- Wind-Damp Bi with pain mainly in the lower back, knees and legs, and heaviness, cramping or weakness
- Wasting and spasm of the legs

Promotes urination and relieves painful urinary dysfunction

- Lin patterns from Damp-Heat, with scanty urine that is painful to pass or contains blood

Leads Blood and Fire downward

- Upward-flaring Fire causing bleeding (vomiting of blood, nosebleed), with headache, dizziness, toothache and mouth or tongue ulcers
- Headache and dizziness from ascending Liver Yang
- Used as a guide to direct a formula's action toward the lower body

Tonifies the Liver and Kidneys and strengthens the sinews and bones

- Sore, weak and painful lower back and knees

Caulis Clematidis Armandii
clematidis caulis

Promotes urination and drains Damp-Heat

- Damp-Heat in the Bladder with difficult, scanty, painful dribbling urination

Clears Heart Heat and drains Fire downward

- Heart Heat passed down through the Small Intestine: sores of the mouth and tongue, irritability and dark, scanty urine

Promotes lactation and unblocks the vessels

- Insufficient breast milk
- Amenorrhea
- Painful, stiff joints

Rhizoma Dioscoreae Nipponicae
Japanese dioscorea rhizome
Lung · Liver

Dispels Wind and eliminates Damp

- Wind-Damp Bi with numb skin and flesh, and joints that are hard to bend and straighten
- Often chosen for Hot Bi

Invigorates Blood, unblocks the collaterals and relaxes the sinews

- Blood stasis after injury
- Chest Bi
- Stagnant Qi and Blood of the Heart

Transforms Phlegm and stops cough

- Cough from Lung Heat

Squama Manitis
pangolin scales
Stomach · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis, unblocks menstruation and promotes lactation

- Absent or painful, obstructed periods from Blood stasis
- Breast milk that is scanty or blocked

Reduces swelling and expels pus

- Abscesses, boils and toxic swellings: early on to disperse them before pus forms, and later to help sores that have not broken to drain
- Suppurating lesions, applied topically to help them heal

Expels Wind-Damp and unblocks the channels and collaterals

- Wind-Damp Bi with pain, stiffness or spasm of the limbs, or pain so severe that bending and lifting are not possible
- Stubborn painful obstruction of the joints and channels

chuan wu

Bencao Index

chuan xin lian

Bencao Index

chuan xiong

Bencao Index

chui pen cao

Bencao Index

Herba Andrographis
Andrographis
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach · Small Intestine

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxicity and benefits the throat
Heat in the Lungs and throat, with a sore, swollen throat, cough or wheezing
Lung abscess
Encephalitis B
Acute gastrointestinal infection
Carbuncles, toxic sores (Chuang Yung) and skin disorders from toxin

Clears Damp-Heat and stops diarrhea
Acute diarrhea or dysentery from Damp-Heat in the Intestines
Gallbladder Heat
Viral hepatitis
Herpes zoster
Hot, painful urinary dysfunction (Lin), including urinary tract infection

Cools the Blood
Nosebleed

Resolves Phlegm
Phlegm-Heat with pus in the sputum

Clears Heat toxin when applied externally
Eczema and itchy, weeping skin lesions from Damp-Heat, as a powder, wash or ointment
Snakebite, with the fresh herb applied to the skin, and insect bites in folk use

Dispels Wind-Damp and warms the channels
Chronic Wind-Cold-Damp Bi with severe, fixed pain of the joints and limbs that gets worse in the cold

Disperses Cold and relieves severe pain
Cold pain in the abdomen, or in the chest and Heart region
Cold Shan (hernia-type) pain
Pain from traumatic injury

Relieves pain (external use)
Cold-Damp aching and swelling, applied to the skin; classically the unprocessed root was used only this way

Herba Sedi
Hanging Stonecrop
Small Intestine · Gallbladder · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, reduces abscesses and disperses swelling
Sores and abscesses, including those in the throat, taken internally or applied to the skin
Snakebite
Burns

Clears Heat and toxicity, resolves Damp and relieves jaundice
Jaundice from Damp-Heat

Rhizoma Chuanxiong
Chuanxiong Root
Pericardium · Gallbladder · Liver

Invigorates Blood and moves Qi
Gynecological Blood stasis: periods that are irregular, painful or absent, a difficult labor, and retained lochia or abdominal pain after childbirth
Stagnant Qi and Blood with pain and soreness of the chest, flanks and hypochondrium
Pain in the muscles and joints from Qi and Blood stasis

Expels Wind and relieves pain
Headache of many kinds (Wind-Cold, Wind-Heat, Wind-Damp, Blood deficiency, Blood stasis), with the companion herbs chosen to suit the pattern
Dizziness from Wind
Bi syndrome from externally contracted Wind
Skin disorders from Wind
Numbness and paralysis
Chronic sores that fail to heal, with or without pus

ci shi

Bencao Index

ci wei pi

Bencao Index

ci wu jia

Bencao Index

cong bai

Bencao Index

Corium Erinacei
hedgehog skin
Large Intestine · Stomach

Dispels Wind and disperses Cold
Blood in the stool, bloody dysentery, hemorrhoids and intestinal bleeding
Dysfunctional uterine bleeding

Moves Qi and stops pain
Stomach pain, regurgitation and vomiting

Secures Jing and controls urination

Transforms Phlegm
Mastitis

Magnetitum
Magnetite
Kidney · Liver

Anchors Liver Yang and calms the Spirit
Restless Heart and Spirit with palpitations, anxiety, insomnia, fright and tremor, where Yin is deficient below and Yang floats upward
Liver Fire from Kidney Yin deficiency that unsettles the Spirit
Liver Yang rising, with headache, dizziness and vertigo, and sore red eyes
Seizures, and convulsions in children brought on by fright or shock

Benefits Yin, nourishes the Kidneys and Liver, and sharpens hearing and vision
Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency with poor hearing or deafness, tinnitus, or blurred and failing eyesight

Helps the Kidneys grasp Qi
Chronic wheezing and breathlessness from Kidneys failing to grasp Qi

Bulbus Alli Fistulosi
Scallion
Lung · Stomach

Releases the Exterior and induces sweating
Wind-Cold in its very first stage (the first day or two): chills, headache, a blocked or runny nose, and no sweating

Disperses Cold and unblocks Yang Qi
Abdominal pain with cold and fullness when Cold blocks the Yang Qi
Nasal congestion and pain of a Cold type

Resolves toxicity and disperses clumps
Sores and abscesses, with the crushed bulb applied as a poultice

Kills parasites
Abdominal pain from intestinal parasites

Eleutherococci Senticosi Radix Et Caulis
Siberian Ginseng
Spleen · Heart · Kidney

Tonifies Spleen and Stomach Qi to support transformation and transportation, and warms the Kidneys so their Yang can warm the Spleen
Weakness of the lower back and legs
A heavy feeling in the body with loss of appetite
Fatigue

Augments Heart Qi and calms the Shen
Deficient Heart Qi causing insomnia, much dreaming, poor concentration and mild depression

Invigorates Blood and unblocks the collaterals
Poor circulation to the extremities with signs of Blood stasis

da dou juan

Bencao Index

da feng zi

Bencao Index

da fu pi

Bencao Index

da huang

Bencao Index

Semen Hydnocarp
gynocardia odorata
Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Expels Wind, dries Damp, attacks toxicity and kills parasites

Leprosy, used internally or topically; recorded in Chinese sources since at least medieval times
Scabies, applied topically
Tinea (ringworm), applied topically
Syphilis, applied topically
Chronic, non-healing skin eruptions of the Damp-Heat or Wind-toxin type

Semen Sojae Germinatum
dried soybean sprout
Stomach

Releases the Exterior and clears Summerheat and Damp-Heat

Edema
Warm-Damp disease with sweating that does not resolve the illness
Summerheat or fever at an early stage, while Heat and Damp are still at the Exterior
Aching joints and a heavy feeling throughout the body from accumulated Damp; in Summerheat patterns the heaviness is often the most telling sign

Invigorates Qi and Blood and reduces water swelling

Damp-Heat Bi with cramping sinews and painful knees

Raises Yang Qi and opens the channels and collaterals

Joint pain from Damp

Radix et Rhizoma Rhei
Rhubarb Root And Rhizome
Large Intestine · Stomach · Heart · Liver

Drains Heat and purges accumulation

Excess Heat in the Intestines with constipation, a distended and painful abdomen, high fever, heavy sweating, thirst and delirium; the tongue coat is yellow and the pulse full
Yang Ming Fu-organ pattern
Heat at the Qi level lodged in the Intestines

Drains Fire

Excess Fire with high fever, sore throat, painful eyes and constipation
Sores from Fire toxin with Heat at the Blood level, especially when the bowels are blocked

Clears Heat, transforms Damp and promotes urination

Damp-Heat showing as jaundice, edema, painful urinary dysfunction or acute hot dysentery, with the Damp-Heat drained out through the stool

Drains Heat from the Blood

Blood in the stool from hemorrhoids or from Intestinal Heat
Heat driving the Blood out of its vessels, with nosebleed or coughing or vomiting of blood, and constipation
Bleeding in the upper digestive tract, taken by mouth as a powder

Invigorates Blood and dispels stasis

Blood stasis with absent or painful periods, fixed abdominal masses or tumors, or pain in a fixed place
Stasis after traumatic injury
Intestinal abscess

Clears Heat and resolves Fire toxicity

Burns and skin lesions from Heat (Chuang Yung), applied to the skin or taken internally
Fever and swollen eyes from toxic Heat

Clears Heat and eliminates Phlegm

Long-standing Phlegm-Heat with cough, labored breathing, mania, confusion and other signs of Phlegm misting the Heart

Pericarpium Arecae
Areca Husk
Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen · Small Intestine

Moves Qi downward and eases the Middle Jiao

Damp, food or Qi stagnating in the Stomach, Intestines and Middle Jiao: distension of the epigastrium and abdomen, focal fullness, an oppressed feeling, belching and acid reflux
Of particular use when bowel movements are also incomplete or irregular
Morning sickness, traditionally

Promotes urination and reduces edema

Edema with abdominal distension, particularly swelling just under the skin or edema with signs of food stagnation
Damp leg Qi, with swollen legs

da ji

Bencao Index

da qing ye

Bencao Index

da suan

Bencao Index

da zao

Bencao Index

Folium Isatidis

Isatis Leaf

Lung · Stomach · Heart

Clears Heat and resolves Fire toxicity

Warm febrile disease: high fever with thirst and irritability, and a scarlet tongue

Pneumonia

Severe epidemic Fire toxin that affects everyone, whatever their constitution

Fire toxin (Chuang Yung) anywhere in the body, above all in the Lungs and throat, including a sore, swollen throat

Throat Bi and ulcers in the mouth

Skin eruptions from Heat toxin, erysipelas-like redness and swellings, applied topically

Cools the Blood and dissipates maculae

Dark purple or crimson blotches and rashes from intense

Blood Heat, its particular strength

Very high fever with irritability and altered consciousness

Gallbladder Heat

Vomiting of blood

Clears Heat toxin from the head and upper body

Mumps

Sores of the mouth and tongue

Red, swollen eyes

Cirsii Japonici Herba Sive Radix

Japanese cirsium

Spleen · Heart · Liver

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Bleeding from Blood Heat: nosebleed, coughing or vomiting of blood, blood in the urine or stool, and uterine bleeding

Nosebleed, vomiting of blood or heavy periods, treated with the fresh juice alone

Disperses Blood stasis, reduces swelling, resolves toxicity and generates flesh

Carbuncles, abscesses, sores and swellings (Chuang Yung) from Heat toxin with stagnant Blood, taken internally or

applied fresh to the skin

Clears Damp-Heat from the Liver and Gallbladder and reduces jaundice

Jaundice, particularly of the Damp-Heat type

Lowers blood pressure

High blood pressure, particularly with Liver Heat or Fire

Fructus Jujubae

Chinese date

Stomach · Spleen

Tonifies the Spleen and Stomach and augments Qi

Spleen and Stomach deficiency with weakness, lethargy, shortness of breath, poor appetite and loose stools

Nourishes Blood and calms the Spirit

Blood deficiency

Qi and Blood deficiency together, with pallor, fatigue and low energy, alongside other tonics

Restless Organ disorder (Zang Zao) with a wan complexion, irritability and marked emotional fragility

Restlessness and unsettled mood from deficient Heart and Spleen Qi

Moderates and harmonises the harsh properties of other herbs

Softens the harshness, bitterness, drying or purging force of stronger herbs, and protects digestion so the formula is better tolerated

Bulbus Allii

Garlic Bulb

Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen

Kills parasites

Hookworm and pinworm, and other intestinal worms when combined with suitable herbs

Tinea of the scalp

Disperses abscesses and reduces swelling

Abscesses, boils and sores at the early stage before pus forms, as a paste on the skin or taken internally

Nodules, scrofula or early sores treated with moxa burned on a slice of garlic

Resolves toxicity

Tinea and other itchy rashes, mostly applied to the skin

Toxic Heat presentations, taken by mouth

Warms the Spleen and Stomach, moves Qi, reduces stagnation and resolves toxicity

Diarrhea and dysentery from epidemic toxin or food stagnation; garlic alone can treat mild food stagnation

Cold invading the digestive tract, with distension and cold pain in the epigastrium or abdomen

Bacterial-type dysentery and diarrhea, raw or decocted

Prevents epidemic infection and treats shellfish poisoning

Bacterial and viral epidemics, including influenza

Respiratory infections and whooping cough

Pulmonary tuberculosis as a supporting herb, paired with Bai Ji when the cough brings up blood-streaked sputum

Shellfish poisoning

dai dai hua

Bencao Index

dai zhe shi

Bencao Index

dan dou chi

Bencao Index

dan nan xing

Bencao Index

Haematitum
Hematite
Heart · Pericardium · Liver

Calms the Liver, anchors floating Yang and clears Liver Fire

Ascending Liver Yang with dizziness and vertigo, headache, ringing in the ears, irritability, and a feeling of pressure behind the eyes

Strongly directs rebellious Qi downward

Rebellious Qi of the Lungs and Stomach: belching, hiccups, nausea and vomiting, labored breathing and acute wheezing

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Bleeding from Blood Heat: vomiting of blood, nosebleed, blood in the stool, and heavy menstrual bleeding or flooding
Bleeding from Deficiency Cold, combined with suitable herbs

Flos Citri Aurantii Amarae
Stomach · Liver

Soothes the Liver and regulates Qi

Fullness and oppression in the chest
Epigastric pain

Harmonises the Stomach

Vomiting
Poor appetite

Arisaema Cum Bile
bile arisaema
Lung · Spleen · Liver

Clears Heat and transforms Phlegm-Heat

Cough bringing up yellow phlegm that is thick and sticky
Agitation or confusion when Phlegm-Heat clouds the mind

Calms Wind and stops convulsions

Seizures, convulsions in infants and children, cramps and muscle spasm, and tetanus or lockjaw, where Phlegm-Heat has stirred up Wind

Opens the channels in Wind-stroke

Stroke with facial paralysis, slurred speech and stiff limbs, from Wind and Phlegm obstructing the channels

Semen Sojae Preparatum
Prepared Soybean
Lung · Stomach

Releases the Exterior

Wind-Heat or Wind-Cold, the choice resting on the fermentation method
Exterior conditions on top of Yin deficiency, where this mild herb suits better than stronger sweating herbs

Relieves irritability, harmonises the Middle Jiao and eases oppression in the chest

Restlessness, irritability, a tight, stuffy chest and insomnia, especially in the wake of a febrile illness; used alone or with Zhi Zi

dan shen

Bencao Index

dan zhu ye

Bencao Index

dang gui

Bencao Index

dang shen

Bencao Index

Herba Lophatheri

Lophatherum

Stomach · Heart · Small Intestine

Clears Heat and relieves irritability

Febrile illness or internal Heat with thirst, a dry mouth, agitation and restlessness

Early Wind-Heat or warm disease, alongside herbs that release the Exterior and nourish Fluids

Sores of the mouth, lips and tongue, and swollen, painful gums, from Heat in the Heart or Stomach

Promotes urination and clears Damp-Heat

Urination that is scanty, rough and painful

Heart Heat passed down to the Small Intestine: dark, scanty, painful urination with irritability and a red tongue tip

Radix et Rhizoma Salviae Miltiorrhizae

Dan Shen

Lung · Spleen · Heart · Pericardium · Liver

Invigorates Blood and dispels stasis

Blood stasis in the Lower Jiao, a key use in gynecology: irregular or absent periods and abdominal pain after childbirth

Blood stasis obstructing the chest, with pain there or in the epigastrium or abdomen

Pain in the flanks and hypochondrium from Liver Qi stagnation with Blood stasis

Traumatic injury

Masses and accumulations

Clears Heat and relieves irritability

Heat that has reached the Ying level, with restlessness, irritability, palpitations and insomnia

Yin deficiency of the Heart and Kidneys

Cools the Blood and reduces abscesses

Toxic sores and early breast abscess, as a supporting herb

Febrile disease with Heat in the Blood: high fever, delirium or loss of consciousness, irritability, insomnia, and purpura or bleeding under the skin

Nourishes Blood and calms the Spirit

Palpitations and insomnia from Heat in the Heart or at the Ying and Blood levels

Heart Blood deficiency

Radix Codonopsis

Codonopsis Root

Lung · Spleen

Tonifies the Middle Jiao and augments Qi

Chronic illness from Spleen Qi deficiency: poor appetite, fatigue, heavy tired limbs, loose stools or diarrhea, vomiting and a pale complexion

Tonifies Lung Qi

Lung Qi deficiency with a long-standing cough, shortness of breath and a weak voice

Copious phlegm from deficient Spleen Qi

Supports the constitution alongside herbs that release the Exterior or purge downward when Qi is markedly deficient

Upholds the body's upright Qi while other herbs drive out the pathogen

Nourishes Blood and generates Fluids

Deficient Qi, Blood and Fluids, especially after long illness, with thirst or mild Blood deficiency

A gentler substitute for Ren Shen where ginseng would be indicated, outside collapse patterns

Radix Angelicae Sinensis

Chinese angelica

Spleen · Heart · Liver

Tonifies Blood and regulates menstruation

Blood deficiency of the Heart and Liver: a pale or sallow face, pale brittle nails, dry hair, blurred vision, ringing in the ears and palpitations

Scanty, irregular, painful or absent periods arising from Blood deficiency

Invigorates Blood, disperses Cold and relieves pain

Abdominal pain from Blood stasis, particularly with

Deficiency Cold

Pain and swelling after traumatic injury

Menstrual pain or amenorrhea from Cold with stagnant Qi and Blood

Postpartum disorders

Long-standing Wind-Damp Bi with Blood deficiency

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

Constipation from dry Intestines due to Blood deficiency, common in older people, after childbirth and in chronic illness

Reduces swelling, expels pus, generates flesh and relieves pain

Sores, abscesses and carbuncles, taken internally or applied externally

Stops cough and calms wheezing

Cough and breathlessness, as a supporting herb

dao dou zi

Bencao Index

deng xin cao

Bencao Index

di er cao

Bencao Index

di fu zi

Bencao Index

Medulla Junci
juncus
Lung · Heart · Small Intestine

Promotes urination, leaches out Damp and relieves painful urinary dysfunction

Excess Heat
Hot, painful, dribbling urination with dark, scanty urine, usually from Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao

Clears Heart Heat, leads Fire downward and calms the Spirit

Poor sleep in children (night crying, night terrors, restless sleep) with irritability that is worse at night and dark, scanty urine; it can be used on its own
Heart and Kidneys failing to communicate, with insomnia and restless sleep
Kidney Yin deficiency with Heart Fire
Yin deficiency of the Heart and Kidneys
Excess (Shi) Heat in the Small Intestine

Clears Lung Heat

Sore throat from Lung Heat; the charred herb eases the pain, taken internally or applied topically

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Bleeding from Heat, using the charred herb; unprocessed, it drains water and clears Heat instead

Semen Canavaliae
canavalia gladiata
Stomach · Kidney

Warms the Spleen and Stomach, directs Qi downward and stops hiccups

Deficiency Cold of the Stomach with hiccups, belching, vomiting and abdominal distension
Wheezing from excess Phlegm

Supplements Kidney Qi and assists Yang

Lower back pain

Fructus Kochiae
belvedere fruit
Bladder · Kidney

Clears Damp-Heat and promotes urination

Lin pattern from Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao, with dark, scanty, burning urine that is difficult or painful to pass

Expels Damp and stops itching

Itchy Damp skin conditions such as eczema, hives and scabies, including widespread weeping eruptions; taken internally or used as an external wash or soak
Damp-Heat of the external genitals, with itching and discharge

Clears Wind-Heat from the head and eyes

Wind-Heat causing painful swelling of the eyes and head, and skin conditions

Herba Hyperici Japonici
Japanese St. John's wort
Lung · Kidney · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, promotes urination, reduces swelling and clears Damp-Heat

Tonsillitis
Internal and external injuries
Infectious hepatitis
Febrile convulsions
Diarrhea and dysentery
Appendicitis
Malnutrition in infants
Swellings
Snakebite
Dermatitis, applied as a lotion

di gu pi

Bencao Index

di jin cao

Bencao Index

di long

Bencao Index

di yu

Bencao Index

Herba Euphorbiae Humifusae

euphorbiae humifusae

Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach · Bladder · Liver

Invigorates and cools the Blood, moves Qi and stops bleeding

Bleeding with Blood stagnation: blood in the stool or urine,

coughing up blood, and uterine spotting or flooding

Bleeding from external injury

Corns (clavus)

Clears Heat and expels toxins

Malignant boils and deep-rooted boils

Incised wounds

Drains Damp, promotes urination and promotes lactation

Bacillary dysentery

Jaundice

Colitis and enteritis

Kills intestinal parasites

Parasitic infestation

Cortex Lycii

Chinese wolfberry root-bark

Lung · Kidney · Liver

Cools the Blood and drains Deficiency Fire from Yin deficiency, clearing Kidney Fire, lurking Heat and Heat in the bones

Yin deficiency with Deficiency Fire (Kidney Fire) flaring

upward: steaming bone fever with sweating, night sweats,

chronic low-grade fever, flushed cheeks, thirst and irritability

Tuberculosis

Toothache from Deficiency Fire floating up the Kidney

channel

Clears and drains Lung Heat, stops cough and calms wheezing

Cough or wheezing from Lung Heat

Clears Heat, cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Bleeding from Heat in the Blood, such as coughing or

vomiting of blood, nosebleed or blood in the urine

Radix Sanguisorbae

garden burnet root

Large Intestine · Stomach · Liver

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Lower Jiao bleeding from Damp-Heat or Blood Heat: blood in

the stool, bleeding hemorrhoids, bloody dysentery and heavy

uterine bleeding

Nosebleed and vomiting of blood from Blood Heat

Clears toxic Heat, astringes seepage and generates flesh

Sores, ulcers, abscesses, burns and scalds, applied

topically; it dries up oozing and helps new tissue grow

Pheretima

angle worm

Lung · Spleen · Bladder · Liver

Drains Heat, settles convulsions, extinguishes Wind and stops spasms

Extreme Heat stirring up Wind: high fever with convulsions,

seizures, spasms or tremor, loss of consciousness and

incoherent speech

Can be used as a single herb

Recently also given for manic schizophrenia with Heat

Clears Heat and unblocks the channels and collaterals

Bi with swollen, painful joints and limited movement: suited to

Hot Bi, and to Cold Bi when combined with suitable herbs

Hemiplegia from blocked channels, as after Wind-stroke

Clears the Lungs and calms wheezing

Cough and wheezing with Lung Heat, bronchitis among

them; the classic partners are Xi Xin and Ma Huang

Useful as a single herb here, in capsule or powder form or

boiled with sugar into a syrup

Clears Heat and promotes urination

Hot, painful urinary dysfunction

Severe edema, ascites and jaundice

Heat clumped in the Bladder, with difficult urination or no

urine at all; can be used alone, or paired with Mu Tong

Anchors Liver Yang and lowers blood pressure

High blood pressure from ascending Liver Yang

Promotes healing when applied topically

Mumps (acute parotitis), chronic leg ulcers, burns, boils and

carbuncles, with the powder mixed with sugar and applied to

the area

ding gong teng

Bencao Index

ding xiang

Bencao Index

dong chong xia cao

Bencao Index

dong gua pi

Bencao Index

Flos Caryophylli
Clove
Stomach · Spleen · Kidney

Warms the Middle Jiao, directs rebellious Qi downward and relieves pain

- Cold in the Stomach with hiccups, nausea, vomiting, cold abdominal pain and diarrhea
- Deficiency Cold of the Spleen and Stomach with poor appetite, vomiting and loose stools

Warms the Kidneys and assists Yang

- Impotence from deficient Kidney Yang
- Cold in the Womb from Kidney Yang deficiency, with clear, cold vaginal discharge and often weak legs

Caulis Erycibes
obtuseleaf erycibe stem
Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Dispels Wind, eliminates Damp, reduces swelling and relieves pain

- Rheumatic joint pain from Wind and Damp
- Hemiplegia
- Pain and swelling after traumatic injury

Exocarpium Benincasae
Chinese waxgourd peel
Lung · Small Intestine

Promotes urination, clears Heat and reduces edema

- Edema from Damp-Heat
- Abdominal distension with difficult urination

Clears Summerheat

- Summerheat with thirst, irritability and dark, scanty urine

Cordyceps
Chinese caterpillar fungus
Lung · Kidney

Tonifies the Kidneys, strengthens Yang and augments Jing

- Kidney Yang deficiency with impotence, seminal emission, and a sore, weak lower back, knees and legs
- Kidney Jing deficiency
- Kidney Yin deficiency
- A gentle Yang tonic that also nourishes Yin, so it is more balanced and less drying than most

Nourishes Lung Yin, transforms Phlegm and stops bleeding

- Lung Yin deficiency with a chronic cough and wheezing
- Consumptive cough with streaks of blood in the sputum
- Wheezing from combined Lung and Kidney deficiency

Supports recovery from debility

- General depletion after a long illness, including spontaneous sweating from Qi deficiency

dong gua zi

Bencao Index

dong kui zi

Bencao Index

dou chi jiang

Bencao Index

du huo

Bencao Index

Large Intestine · Small Intestine · Bladder

Promotes urination and relieves painful urinary dysfunction

- Damp-Heat Lin, particularly Stone Lin and Blood Lin
- Edema without Lin symptoms, as a supporting herb
- Of special help when either problem comes with constipation

Benefits the breasts and promotes lactation

- Scant breast milk, swollen and painful breasts, and breast abscess in its early stage

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

- Constipation from dry Intestines lacking Fluids or Yin, rather than from Qi stagnation

Semen Benincasae

Chinese waxgourd seed

Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach · Small Intestine

Clears Heat, expels Phlegm, expels pus and moistens the Lungs

- Lung Heat with thick, yellow sputum that may smell foul
- Intestinal Heat
- Lung or intestinal abscess, sometimes with foul discharge, where Damp-Heat and Phlegm obstruct the Upper or Lower Jiao

Clears Heat, promotes urination and drains Damp

- Edema
- Vaginal discharge from Damp-Heat

Radix Angelicae Pubescentis

double teeth pubescent angelica root

Bladder · Kidney

Dispels Wind-Damp and relieves pain

- Bi from Wind, Cold and Damp, mainly in the lower back, knees and legs; suits both acute and long-standing cases
- Aching of the legs and joints; regarded as the best herb of its group for pain in the lower half of the body

Releases the Exterior and disperses Wind-Cold-Damp

- Exterior Wind-Cold with Damp: chills and fever, headache, aching body and joints, a heavy feeling and aversion to cold

Treats Shao Yin headache and toothache

- Headache or toothache at the Shao Yin level, where Wind-Cold-Damp has settled deep into that channel

Radix Litseae

mountain spicy tree root and rhizome

Disperses Wind-Cold

- Common cold with headache and aching all over the body

Warms the Middle Jiao and relieves pain

- Cold-type pain of the epigastrium and abdomen with vomiting or diarrhea

Dispels Wind-Damp

- Wind-Damp Bi of the joints and muscles

Moves Qi and reduces swelling

- Leg Qi (beriberi) and edema
- Edema in pregnancy, as a traditional use
- Swelling and bruising from injury

du zhong

Bencao Index

duan xue liu

Bencao Index

e bu shi cao

Bencao Index

e jiao

Bencao Index

Herba Clinopodii

clinopodii

Lung

Dispels Wind, clears Heat, moves Qi, invigorates Blood and reduces swelling

Common cold with fever and headache

Vomiting and diarrhea

Bacillary dysentery and enteritis

Abdominal pain from food stagnation

Mastitis

Boils

Internal and external injuries

Dysfunctional uterine bleeding

Measles

Sore throat

Diphtheria

Snake and insect bites

Hives (urticaria)

Erysipelas

Cortex Eucommiae

Eucommia Bark

Kidney · Liver

Tonifies the Liver and Kidneys and strengthens the sinews and bones

Liver and Kidney deficiency with a sore, weak or aching lower back and knees, weak legs, tiredness and frequent urination

Weak sinews and bones

Promotes the smooth flow of Qi and Blood

Improves circulation where the sinews and bones are weak

Calms the fetus

Bleeding during pregnancy in a Kidney deficiency, Cold pattern

Threatened miscarriage with a restless fetus, marked backache or a deficient constitution, alongside other herbs that calm the fetus

Calms ascending Liver Yang and lowers blood pressure

Liver Yang rising on a base of deficient Liver and Kidneys, with light-headedness, dizziness and blurred vision

Warms and tonifies Kidney Yang

Impotence, incontinence and other reproductive or urinary disorders, with a cold, weak lower body

Colla Asini Corii

Ass-Hide Glue

Lung · Kidney · Liver

Tonifies the Blood

Blood deficiency with dizziness, palpitations, insomnia and a pale or sallow face; the first choice when Blood has been lost

Nourishes Blood and stops bleeding

Bleeding of many kinds, especially the chronic, deficient type seen in consumptive disease: coughing up blood, blood in the stool, and heavy or irregular uterine bleeding

Nourishes Yin and calms the Spirit

Heart Yin left deficient after a Warm febrile disease, with sleeplessness and irritability; classically combined with Huang Lian

Moistens the Lungs and Large Intestine

Dry cough and wheezing from Lung Yin deficiency or consumption

Nourishes the Yin of the Lungs and Kidneys and secures essence

Spermatorrhea, frequent urination or vaginal discharge in deficiency patterns

Herba Centipedae

small centipeda

Lung

Disperses Wind-Cold, unblocks the nose and clears superficial visual obstruction

Acute blocked nose and sinuses, including rhinitis, sinusitis and sinus headache, used internally or topically; particularly with dry, red eyes

A nose that switches between running and blocked

Early Wind-Cold with chills, headache and a stuffy nose

Can be used as a single herb

Nebula and pterygium, a secondary use recorded in older texts

Disperses Wind-Damp, resolves toxicity, reduces swelling and benefits the joints

Toxic or traumatic swellings and localised Bi pain, applied topically, best as the macerated fresh herb

Sores, boils, and insect or snake bites, with the pounded fresh herb applied

Resolves Phlegm, stops cough and calms wheezing

Cough and wheezing from Cold-Phlegm stagnation

Stops pain

Bi from Wind, Cold and Damp

e zhu

Bencao Index

er cha

Bencao Index

fan xie ye

Bencao Index

fang feng

Bencao Index

Catechu
acaciae catechu
Lung

Drains Damp, absorbs pus and heals sores
Sores full of pus, chronic or non-healing sores, and syphilitic sores
Weeping, Damp skin lesions and eczema, applied to dry the discharge and help the wound close

Stops bleeding and generates flesh
Bleeding from wounds and cuts, dusted on as a powder to stop the bleeding and help tissue regrow
Internal bleeding such as nosebleed, coughing or vomiting of blood, blood in the stool and irregular uterine bleeding

Heals mouth sores and throat swelling
Canker sores and other mouth sores, gum disease and sore throat, applied topically, classically with Peng Sha (borax)

Clears Lung Heat, transforms Phlegm, generates Fluids and stops diarrhea
Cough from Lung Heat with thick or yellow sputum
Thirst from Summerheat
Bloody diarrhea, dysentery and chronic diarrhea, drawing on its astringency
These internal uses are now uncommon

Relieves food stagnation in children and aids digestion
Poor digestion and food stagnation in children

Rhizoma Curcumae
Curcuma Rhizome
Spleen · Liver

Breaks up Blood stasis, moves Qi and relieves pain
Blood stasis with abdominal pain and painful or absent periods, including stubborn stasis in the Chong vessel
Masses that can be felt in the epigastrium or abdomen

Dissolves accumulations and relieves pain
Food stagnation with pain, distension, fullness and tightness in the chest, epigastrium and abdomen; it aids digestion by moving Qi and Blood
Nutritional impairment in children

Radix Saposhnikoviae
ledebouriella root
Spleen · Bladder · Liver

Releases the Exterior and expels external Wind
Wind-Cold with chills, aversion to cold, headache, body aches and a stiff neck
Migraine headache

Expels Wind-Damp and relieves pain
Wind-Damp Bi, particularly where Wind predominates, with joint pain made worse by cold and damp

Expels internal Wind and stops spasms
Liver Wind with trembling hands and feet and tetany, as a supporting herb alongside Wind-extinguishing herbs
Spasm from Wind entering through an open wound

Harmonises the Liver and Spleen, stops diarrhea and stops bleeding
Disharmony between Liver and Spleen: abdominal pain and gurgling, with bouts of painful diarrhea that keep returning
Intestinal Wind from imbalance between the Liver and Spleen, with recurring tenesmus, painful diarrhea and bright red blood in the stool

Expels Wind to relieve itching
Wind-type rashes and hives

Folium Sennae
Senna Leaf
Large Intestine

Drains downward and guides out stagnation
Heat accumulating in the Stomach and Intestines, with constipation, abdominal fullness and distension
Habitual constipation, with great care (see cautions)

Clears Excess Heat and drains Summerheat
Summerheat

fei zi

Bencao Index

feng mi

Bencao Index

feng wei cao

Bencao Index

feng xiang zhi

Bencao Index

Mel
honey
Lung · Large Intestine · Spleen

- Moistens the Intestines**
 - Dry stools and constipation from insufficient Fluids; it lubricates rather than purges
- Moistens the Lungs and stops cough**
 - Dry, unproductive cough, including long-standing cough from Lung deficiency
- Tonifies the Spleen and Stomach and relieves pain**
 - Spleen and Stomach deficiency, to lift the appetite, ease pain and restore energy
 - Added to herbal formulas to protect the Spleen and Stomach
- Resolves toxicity**
 - Heat toxin in the skin and surface layers, including applied topically
 - Swallowed poisons
- Binds and prepares medicines**
 - Binds powdered herbs together and is said to slow their release once taken, so doses need repeating less often

Resina Liquidambaris
beautiful sweetgum resin
Lung · Spleen · Liver

- Invigorates Blood and relieves pain**
 - Blood stasis
- Resolves toxicity, cools the Blood, stops bleeding and generates flesh**
 - Coughing or vomiting of blood, and nosebleed
 - Carbuncles, deep-rooted boils, furuncles and ulcers
 - Scrofula
 - Toothache
 - Bleeding from cuts and incised wounds

Semen Torreyae
torreya
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

- Kills parasites and reduces accumulation**
 - Intestinal worms, including roundworm, hookworm, pinworm and tapeworm, and fasciolopsis flukes; can be used alone
 - Suits children and weaker patients, since it expels worms without harsh purging and does not harm Spleen and Stomach Qi
- Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels**
 - Constipation, including with hemorrhoids; the dry-fried seeds can simply be eaten on their own
- Moistens the Lungs and stops cough**
 - Mild dry cough from Lung dryness, usually with herbs that nourish Lung Yin
- Stops diarrhea**
 - Diarrhea and dysentery

Herba Petridis Multifidae
huguenot fern
Lung · Large Intestine · Bladder · Gallbladder · Liver

- Clears Heat, drains Damp, stops diarrhea and reduces inflammation**
 - Damp-Heat in the Large Intestine, Bladder or Spleen
 - Diarrhea
 - Difficult urination
- Cools the Blood, resolves toxicity and stops bleeding**
 - Bleeding caused by toxic Heat in the Blood
 - Cancer attributed to toxic Heat in the Blood
 - Dysentery
 - Blood in the stool, bleeding hemorrhoids and nosebleed

fo shou

Bencao Index

fu hai shi

Bencao Index

fu ling

Bencao Index

fu ling pi

Bencao Index

Costaziae
Constaziae Skeleton
Lung

Clears Lung Heat, transforms Phlegm and disperses stagnation

- Heat accumulated in the Lungs: thick, sticky sputum that is hard to bring up, sometimes streaked with blood, or coughing of blood
- Long-standing, stubborn cough; used mostly for chronic conditions

Softens hardness and dissipates Phlegm nodules

- Goiter, scrofula and similar nodules of the neck from Phlegm-Fire

Promotes urination, dissolves stones and opens the upper source of water (the Lungs)

- Stone Lin with Heat: urinary stones and painful, dribbling urination, usually alongside other herbs that dissolve stones or clear Heat
- Painful or difficult urination

Fructus Citri Sarcodactylis
Buddha's hand
Lung · Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Spreads and regulates Liver Qi

- Constrained Liver Qi with pain or distension of the hypochondrium and abdomen, an oppressed chest, belching, hiccups and vomiting; it moves the stagnation well but eases pain only mildly
- Emotional problems with Liver Yin deficiency

Harmonises the Stomach, dries Damp and strengthens the Spleen

- Stagnant Qi of the Spleen and Stomach: epigastric pain, fullness and distension, poor appetite, belching or vomiting
- Liver Qi stagnation invading the Stomach
- Stomach Qi stagnation with Yin deficiency

Regulates Lung Qi, transforms Phlegm and stops cough

- Lingering subacute or chronic cough from Phlegm-Damp in the chest, with plenty of phlegm, above all when the cough will not settle and the chest hurts
- Only mildly Phlegm-resolving; not a choice for the opening days of a cough from an external pathogen

Cutis Poriae
Indian bread exodermis
Lung · Spleen · Heart · Kidney

Promotes urination and reduces edema

- Edema at the level of the skin
- Damp and edema where a purely draining herb is wanted, with no tonifying effect

Poria
Poria
Lung · Spleen · Heart · Kidney

Promotes urination and leaches out Damp

- Edema of any cause
- Difficult urination, diarrhea or edema from accumulated fluids or Damp
- Stagnant fluids
- Damp-Heat with difficult or scanty urination (Chi Fu Ling)

Strengthens the Spleen and harmonises the Middle Jiao

- Spleen deficiency with Damp: poor appetite, loose stools or diarrhea, lethargy and epigastric distension

Strengthens the Spleen and transforms Phlegm

- Deficient Spleen producing Phlegm-Damp and thin mucus that rise upward: dizziness, headache and palpitations, with a greasy, thick tongue coat

Quiets the Heart and calms the Spirit

- Palpitations, insomnia or poor memory from deficiency of the Heart and Spleen, or from turbid Phlegm obstructing within
- Disturbed Shen and a restless Heart (Fu Shen)

fu long gan

Bencao Index

fu pen zi

Bencao Index

fu ping

Bencao Index

fu shen

Bencao Index

Fructus Rubi
Chinese Raspberry
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies and stabilises the Kidneys and secures Jing and urine

Seminal emission, premature ejaculation, wet dreams or impotence when deficient Kidney Yang or Kidney Qi fails to secure essence
Frequent urination or bedwetting when Kidney Qi cannot control urine, often with Sang Piao Xiao and Qian Shi

Tonifies Yang and brightens the eyes

Blurred or poor vision, a sore lower back and impotence from Liver and Kidney deficiency

Moistens the hair

Hair that is dry because essence and Blood are deficient, combined with Gou Qi Zi and Shu Di Huang

Terra Flava Usta
ignited yellow earth;oven earth; terra flava usta
Stomach · Spleen

Warms the Middle Jiao, astringes and stops bleeding

Bleeding from Deficiency Cold of the Stomach or Intestines, or when Spleen Yang is too weak to keep Blood in the vessels: dark blood in the stool, or uterine bleeding (Beng Lou)

Warms and harmonises the Stomach, directs rebellious Qi downward and stops vomiting

Nausea and vomiting from Stomach Cold
Morning sickness of the Cold type

Stops diarrhea

Chronic diarrhea from Spleen deficiency

Sclerotium Poriae Paaradicus
Indian bread with hostwood
Heart

Calms the Shen

A Heart and Shen pattern, rather than simple Damp, with palpitations, insomnia, irritability and forgetfulness or poor concentration

Promotes urination and drains Damp

Damp, as a mild secondary action; the herb is chosen mainly to calm, not for draining strength

Herba Spirodelae
common ducksmeat
Lung · Bladder

Induces sweating and releases the Exterior

Wind-Heat with body aches, headache and no sweating; it may be given alone, and sweats strongly for a cool, acrid herb

Vents rashes and relieves itching

Measles and other rashes, bringing them out fully so the illness resolves sooner
Itchy Wind rash

Promotes urination and reduces swelling

Superficial edema of a Hot type, mainly in the upper body, with difficult urination, by opening the upper source of water

fu xiao mai

Bencao Index

fu zi

Bencao Index

gan cao

Bencao Index

gan jiang

Bencao Index

Radix Aconiti Lateralis Preparata

prepared aconite root
Spleen · Heart · Kidney

Restores devastated Yang and rescues from collapse

Collapse of Yang: chills, cold limbs and cold sweat, watery stools or diarrhea with undigested food, and a faint pulse that can barely be felt, often following severe vomiting, diarrhea or sweating

Warms the Ming Men Fire and supports the Yang of the Heart, Spleen and Kidneys

Heart Yang deficiency
Spleen Yang deficiency
Kidney Yang deficiency
Interior Cold arising from any of these Yang deficiencies

Disperses Cold and Damp, warms the channels and stops pain

Wind-Damp-Cold Bi
Cold that has settled in the vessels, sinews, bones, channels and organs
Flat, Yin-type abscesses

Fructus Triticis Levis

blighted wheat
Heart

Stops sweating from deficiency

Spontaneous sweating from Qi or Yang deficiency
Night sweats from Yin deficiency
Sweating from deficiency after childbirth

Clears Deficiency Heat and augments Qi

Steaming bone sensation, low-grade or tidal fever and hot flushes accompanying deficiency sweating

Nourishes the Heart and calms the Spirit

Heart deficiency with palpitations, restlessness and insomnia

Treats sweating and bedwetting in children

Bedwetting in children
Children who sweat easily

Rhizoma Zingiberis

Dried Ginger Rhizome
Lung · Stomach · Spleen · Heart

Warms the Middle Jiao and expels Cold

Cold invading the Spleen and Stomach from outside
Deficiency Cold of the Spleen and Stomach, with Yang deficiency: a cold, painful epigastrium and abdomen, little appetite, nausea, vomiting and loose stools

Dispels Wind-Damp from the Lower Jiao

Wind-Cold-Damp Bi affecting the Lower Jiao

Rescues collapsed Yang and expels interior Cold

Collapse of Yang with icy limbs and a faint, barely palpable pulse, usually with Fu Zi, whose warmth it sustains for longer

Warms the Lungs and transforms thin fluids

Cold in the Lungs, with cough or wheezing and thin, watery sputum that is clear or white

Warms the channels and stops bleeding

Bleeding from deficiency Cold, above all uterine bleeding, used only when it is long-standing with pale blood, cold limbs, an ashen face and a thin, soggy pulse; the processed form Pao Jiang is preferred

Radix et Rhizoma Glycyrrhizae

Licorice Root
Lung · Stomach · Spleen · Heart

Tonifies the Spleen and augments Qi

Weak Spleen Qi: breathlessness, fatigue, poor appetite and loose stools
Palpitations or an irregular pulse from deficient Qi and Blood
Heart Qi or Heart Yang deficiency

Moistens the Lungs, resolves Phlegm and stops cough

Cough, with or without phlegm, from Heat or Cold in the Lungs
Cough and wheezing of Excess or deficiency type
Lung Wei (atrophy) with long-standing cough, where it may be used alone

Relaxes spasm and relieves pain

Painful cramps in the legs or abdomen
Cramps and spasms of the skeletal muscles, classically paired with Bai Shao as Shao Yao Gan Cao Tang

Clears Heat and resolves Fire toxicity

Heat toxin with a sore throat, or carbuncles and sores (Chuang Yong), using the unprocessed herb inside or on the skin
Erysipelas, or eczema with itching, washed with the decoction

Relieves poisoning

Poisoning by food, herbs, drugs or chemicals, taken by mouth or applied externally
Beef poisoning on its own; drug poisoning with honey; lead poisoning with Xing Ren; herbicide or pesticide poisoning with Hua Shi

Harmonises and moderates the other herbs in a formula and guides them into all twelve channels

gan qi

Bencao Index

gan song

Bencao Index

gan sui

Bencao Index

gao ben

Bencao Index

Rhizoma Nardostachydis Radix Seu

Nardostachys Root

Stomach · Spleen

Moves Qi, awakens the Spleen, relieves stagnation, disperses Cold and stops pain

Distending pain of the epigastrium and abdomen, with poor appetite and a stuffy chest

Stagnant Qi of the chest and abdomen, with no appetite

Sluggish digestion from Damp, or linked to worry and rumination

Toothache

Lung · Stomach

Breaks up Blood stasis, opens the channels and dissolves hardness

Amenorrhea from Blood stasis, particularly with an obstructing mass

Fixed, palpable abdominal masses (concretions) due to Blood stasis

Stasis that is entrenched and chronic; not for mild stagnation

Kills parasites

Intestinal parasites with abdominal pain

Rhizoma Ligustici

Chinese Lovage Root

Bladder · Governing Vessel

Expels Wind-Cold and releases the Exterior

Invasion of Wind-Cold: chills, aches all over and headache
Wind-Cold affecting the head, especially headache and nose complaints

Headache at the crown from Wind-Cold lodged in Tai Yang, including pain that spreads to the cheeks, teeth or jaw; may be used alone

Headache from Wind-Cold-Damp

Dispels Wind-Damp and relieves pain

Wind-Damp-Cold Bi with joint pain

Sudden low back pain from exterior Wind-Cold; it reaches both ends of the Du Mai, which links the lumbar region to the vertex

Cold, cramping pain in the abdomen

Radix Kansui

gansui root

Lung · Large Intestine · Kidney

Drains water downward and drives out congested fluids

Severe fluid collecting in the chest and abdomen, such as ascites or pleural effusion, in a strong patient with an Excess pattern

Generalised edema with facial swelling and a distended abdomen

Acts by forceful purging and urination rather than gentle draining

Expels Phlegm

Epilepsy when Phlegm blocks the orifices of the Heart

Seizures due to Wind-Phlegm

Withdrawal and mania from stubborn Phlegm that has congealed

Phlegm and fluid collected in the chest and rib-sides, which feel full, hard and painful

Clears Heat, reduces swelling and disperses nodules (topical)

Swollen, painful, nodular skin lesions of Damp-Heat, applied externally in the early stage while herbs that clear Heat and toxicity are taken by mouth

gao liang jiang

Bencao Index

ge gen

Bencao Index

ge jie

Bencao Index

ge qiao

Bencao Index

Radix Puerariae
Kudzu Root
Stomach · Spleen

Releases the Exterior and the muscle layer, especially of the neck and upper back

A tight, stiff neck and upper back, with fever and headache, when Wind-Heat or Wind-Cold settles in the muscle layer

Clears Heat, generates fluids and relieves thirst

Thirst from Stomach Heat, particularly when driven by Wind-Heat
Wasting and thirsting disorder (Xiao Ke)

Vents measles

Measles at onset, with a rash that will not fully erupt

Raises Spleen Yang and stops diarrhea

Diarrhea or dysentery of Heat type
Diarrhea from Spleen deficiency, combined with suitable herbs

Eases symptoms that accompany hypertension

Headache, dizziness, ringing in the ears or pins and needles with high blood pressure, as a supporting herb rather than a treatment for the pressure itself

Rhizoma Alpiniae Officinarum
galangal
Stomach · Spleen

Warms the Middle Jiao, disperses Cold and relieves pain

Cold in the Middle Jiao with epigastric or abdominal pain, vomiting, hiccup or diarrhea
Cold-type stomach and abdominal pain that is worse for cold and eased by warmth and pressure
Sudden, localised cold-type pain of the stomach or abdomen, often in someone otherwise healthy

Descends rebellious Stomach Qi and stops vomiting

Stomach Cold with nausea, vomiting, belching or hiccup

Moves Qi and aids digestion (secondary)

Poor appetite and food stagnation linked to Stomach Cold

Concha Meretricis seu Cyclinae
Clam Shell
Lung · Stomach

Clears Lung Heat, transforms Phlegm and descends Lung Qi

Phlegm-Heat or Phlegm-Fire cough and wheezing: thick yellow sputum that is hard to cough up, with pain in the chest and ribs
Cough, asthma, bronchitis

Softens hardness and dissipates nodules

Goiter, thyroid nodules and scrofula from Phlegm-Fire

Promotes urination and drains Damp (mild)

Milky Lin: cloudy, painful urination, with vaginal discharge
Superficial edema with difficult urination
Phlegm-Damp (Tan Yin), and Phlegm that lingers or persists

Neutralises stomach acid and relieves pain (calcined and powdered)

Acid regurgitation and epigastric pain from too much stomach acid
Gastric and duodenal ulcers
Hemorrhoids and bloody dysentery

Gecko
Gecko
Lung · Kidney

Tonifies the Lungs and Kidneys, helps the Kidneys grasp Qi and calms wheezing

Wheezing when weak Kidneys cannot grasp the Lung Qi, often chronic and worse on exertion
Long-standing cough and breathlessness from deficiency of both Lungs and Kidneys
Consumptive cough, or cough with streaks of blood in the sputum

Tonifies Kidney Yang, nourishes Jing and Blood, and steadies Kidney Qi and the Ming Men Fire

Kidney Yang deficiency with impotence, early-morning diarrhea and frequent urination

ge shan xiao

Bencao Index

geng mi

Bencao Index

gong lao ye

Bencao Index

gou ji

Bencao Index

Spleen

Tonifies Yang

Diarrhea from Yang deficiency

Tonifies the Qi of the Lungs, Spleen and Intestines, supports the Middle Jiao and calms restlessness

Weakness and spontaneous sweating from Qi deficiency
Poor digestion and diarrhea, with tiredness, thirst and irritability

Generates fluids and relieves thirst

Depleted Body Fluids
Heat that has consumed the fluids, the rice water helping to restore them

Protects the Stomach from harsh or cold herbs

Added to formulas with very cold or draining herbs to shield the Stomach and keep a strong prescription tolerable

Radix Cynanchi Wilfordii

wilford swallowwort root
Stomach · Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Nourishes Yin, strengthens the Spleen and aids digestion

Abdominal pain
Vaginal discharge
Sores
Dysentery
Malnutrition in children
Dilation of the stomach (gastrectasia)

Regulates the Liver

Poor digestion from stagnant Liver Qi

Rhizoma Cibotii

chain fern
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies the Liver and Kidneys and strengthens the sinews and bones

Liver and Kidney deficiency leaving the lower back, spine and legs stiff, sore or weak
Weak knees and legs with difficulty walking

Expels Wind-Damp and relieves Bi

Wind-Damp Bi with pain, aching or numbness
Chronic Wind-Cold-Damp Bi on a background of Liver and Kidney deficiency, where it is particularly useful

Warms and secures the Kidneys and stops leakage

Kidney Yang deficiency with frequent or uncontrolled urination, spermatorrhea or vaginal discharge
Leg swelling following an illness

Stops bleeding (golden hairs, topical)

Wounds, with the golden hairs packed on to stem bleeding

Folium Ilicis

ilecis leaf
Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Disperses Wind-Heat, clears the head and eyes, and relieves restlessness and thirst

Headache, toothache, irritated eyes, earwax, restlessness and thirst brought on by Wind-Heat
Dysentery

gou qi zi

Bencao Index

gou teng

Bencao Index

gu jing cao

Bencao Index

gu sui bu

Bencao Index

Ramulus Uncariae Cum Uncis

gambir plant
Pericardium · Liver

Extinguishes Wind and stops spasms

Liver Heat generating Wind, with tremor, seizures or eclampsia
Convulsions in children, and sudden spasms

Clears Liver Heat and calms Liver Yang

Liver Fire or rising Liver Yang with headache, dizziness, red eyes and irritability
Hypertension (a more recent use)
Upward-surgng patterns from Liver Heat, combined with herbs that clear Heat and settle Yang

Releases the Exterior

Fever, headache and red eyes from Wind-Heat in the Exterior

Fructus Lycii

Chinese wolfberry fruit
Lung · Kidney · Liver

Nourishes and tonifies the Blood and Yin of the Liver and Kidneys

Deficient Blood and Yin with an aching back and legs, mild abdominal pain, impotence and nocturnal emissions
Sore lower back, weak knees, dizziness and early greying of the hair from Liver and Kidney deficiency
Consumption
Liver and Kidney deficiency

Benefits Jing, nourishes Blood and brightens the eyes

Dizziness, blurred or dry eyes and failing eyesight when the Jing and Blood of the Liver and Kidneys cannot nourish the eyes

Nourishes Yin and moistens the Lungs

Dry, consumptive cough from Yin deficiency
Wasting and thirsting disorder

Rhizoma Drynariae

Drynaria Rhizome
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies Kidney Yang, strengthens the sinews and bones and benefits the ears

Kidney deficiency with a weak, sore lower back and knees, ringing in the ears and poor hearing
Chronic diarrhea from Kidney deficiency
Deficient Kidneys with loose, aching teeth or gums that bleed

Mends sinews and bones and aids recovery after injury

Falls, fractures, bruising and sprains, including a twisted ankle
Ligament injuries and simple fractures, where it is especially useful

Invigorates Blood and stops bleeding

Blood stagnation, particularly after trauma
Bleeding with fractures and sprains

Promotes hair growth (topical)

Patchy hair loss, applied as a tincture or steeped in wine
Vitiligo, applied externally

Flos Eriocauli

pipewort flower
Stomach · Liver

Disperses Wind-Heat from the Liver channel, brightens the eyes and clears superficial visual obstruction

Wind-Heat in the Liver channel: red, swollen eyes, floaters, cataract, light sensitivity, hazy vision, watering eyes or pterygium
Headache, toothache or throat Bi from Wind-Heat
Eye problems that come with Wind-Heat affecting the face and head

gu ya

Bencao Index

gua di

Bencao Index

gua lou

Bencao Index

gua lou pi

Bencao Index

Pedicellus Melo
muskmelon fruit pedicel
Stomach

Induces vomiting to expel Phlegm-Heat, retained food or swallowed poison

Phlegm-Heat or Phlegm and food trapped above the diaphragm, when vomiting is the chosen method: full chest and epigastrium, a blocked feeling in the throat or throat Bi, wheezing, seizures, mania, restlessness or insomnia
Undigested food lodged in the upper Stomach, with distension and pain of the chest and epigastrium; may be given alone
A swallowed poison or harmful substance, where rapid expulsion is the priority (historical use)

Clears Damp-Heat and relieves jaundice

Damp-Heat jaundice in which Damp predominates
Obstinate jaundice of the eyes and face, with nasal stuffiness and headache, when Damp is trapped in the head, treated by blowing the fine powder into the nostrils to draw out a yellowish discharge

Pericarpium Trichosanthis
Trichosanthes Peel
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Clears and moistens the Lungs and transforms Phlegm-Heat

Hot Phlegm lodged in the chest
Lung infections
Dry cough and dry throat from Wind-Heat, with yellow sputum that will not come up easily
Cough and wheezing with hot, sticky phlegm

Regulates Qi and expands the chest

Qi accumulation in the chest with stuffiness and pain
Chest Bi
A tight, oppressed or painful chest as the leading complaint, rather than dryness
Breast abscess at its very beginning, before it is established

Fructus Setariae Germinatus
Barley
Stomach · Spleen

Reduces food stagnation, aids digestion, descends Qi, opens the Stomach and harmonises the Middle Jiao

Starchy food that has not been digested
Weak Spleen Qi leading to food stagnation
Food retained overnight
Indigestion with a full epigastrium and poor appetite, especially after meals heavy in grain

Strengthens the Spleen and restores appetite

Loss of appetite from Spleen deficiency
Poor appetite, sluggish digestion and diarrhea from a weak Spleen; mild enough for longer use and for frail patients

Fructus Trichosanthis
snakegourd fruit
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Clears Lung Heat and transforms Phlegm-Heat

Cough or wheezing from Phlegm-Heat, with sticky yellow phlegm that is hard to bring up
Can be given as a single herb, particularly to children

Regulates Qi and unbinds the chest

Chest Bi: a stifling, distended or tight chest with pain or pressure at the diaphragm, when Qi or Phlegm-Heat accumulates and blocks the Yang Qi of the chest
Phlegm-Heat knotted in the chest and epigastrium, as chief herb of Xiao Xian Xiong Tang
Chest Bi with an oppressive feeling, in the Gua Lou Xie Bai family of formulas

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

Constipation from Heat or dried-out fluids

Reduces abscesses, dissipates nodules and expels pus

Abscesses of the lung, intestine or breast, often with herbs that clear Heat and toxicity
Nodules from Phlegm-Heat

gua lou ren

Bencao Index

guan mu tong

Bencao Index

guan zhong

Bencao Index

guang fang ji

Bencao Index

Caulis Aristolochiae Manshuriensis

manchurian dutchmans pipe stem

Heart · Small Intestine · Bladder

Clears Heart Fire and promotes urination

Blazing Fire in the Heart channel with irritability, mouth

ulcers and sores on the tongue

Scanty, painful or dark urine

Cystitis, urethritis and nephritis

Bedwetting

Vaginal discharge

Fevers

Joint pain from Damp-Heat (Bi), and aching all over

Painful urinary dysfunction (Lin syndrome)

Invigorates Blood, unblocks menstruation, promotes lactation and eases the joints

Amenorrhea from Blood stasis or other causes

Painful periods

Absent or insufficient breast milk

Cancer

Semen Trichosanthis

snakegourd seed

Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Clears Heat, transforms Phlegm-Heat, and cools and moistens the Lungs

Phlegm-Heat cough, particularly with thick, sticky sputum

that is hard to expectorate, sometimes with chest pain

Expands the chest

Phlegm collecting in the chest, felt as stifling, oppressive

fullness, pain, or pressure at the diaphragm

Moistens the Intestines and moves the bowels

Dry stools and constipation with Heat in the Lungs, Stomach

or Large Intestine, often with a dry mouth, thirst and irritability

Promotes healing of sores, dissipates nodules and expels pus

Breast or intestinal abscesses, carbuncles, and swollen

sores that have not yet formed pus, as a supporting herb

Promotes urination

Edema

Radix Aristolochiae Fangchi

kwangfangchi root

Spleen · Bladder · Kidney

Expels Wind-Damp, clears Heat and relieves pain

Wind-Damp-Heat Bi

Best suited to diffuse aches and pains with thirst and a

greasy yellow tongue coat

Aching, painful joints from Wind-Damp

Promotes urination and reduces edema

Floating or generalised edema accompanied by wheezing,

pain or leg Qi

Difficult urination

Rhizoma Cyrtomii

cyrtomii rhizoma

Lung · Large Intestine · Liver

Kills parasites

Roundworm, tapeworm or hookworm (some sources add

pinworm), usually combined with other anti-parasitic herbs

for a stronger effect

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity

Epidemic febrile illness from warm toxin

Traditionally taken as a seasonal preventive during influenza

and other epidemics, and in formulas to prevent mumps or

measles

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding (charred, as Guan Zhong Tan)

Heat-type bleeding, chiefly from the uterus, but also

nosebleeds and bloody stools

guang jin qian cao

Bencao Index

gui ban

Bencao Index

gui jian yu

Bencao Index

gui zhi

Bencao Index

Plastrum Testudinis
Fresh-Water Turtle Plastron
Heart · Kidney · Liver

Nourishes Yin and anchors Yang

Yin deficiency with rising Yang or Fire: low-grade fever, night sweats, dizziness and vertigo, ringing in the ears, steaming bones
Internal Wind stirred up by deficient Liver and Kidney Yin, with facial twitching and trembling hands and feet

Benefits the Kidneys and strengthens the bones

Kidney Yin or Jing deficiency: an aching lower back and weak legs, or in children slow bone growth and a fontanel that is slow to close

Nourishes Blood, enriches Yin and stabilises the Chong and Ren vessels

Uterine bleeding, or vaginal discharge that is red and white

Cools the Blood and stops uterine bleeding

Heavy or irregular periods, or uterine bleeding, when Heat (including deficiency Heat) drives Blood out of the vessels

Nourishes Blood and tonifies the Heart

Deficient Heart Yin or Blood with anxiety, poor sleep, forgetfulness and palpitations

Heals chronic sores (topical)

Sores and ulcers that refuse to heal

Herba Desmodii Styracifolii
snowbell leaf tickclover
Bladder · Kidney · Liver

Clears Heat, promotes urination, relieves painful urinary obstruction and expels stones

Stones in the urinary tract

Ramulus Cinnamomi
cassia twig
Heart

Releases the Exterior and the muscle layer, assists Yang and harmonises the Ying and Wei

Wind-Cold
Tai Yang wind-stroke (Zhong Feng) in a weak person who catches cold easily
Wind-Cold on a background of deficiency, when sweating by itself has not resolved it

Warms the channels and collaterals, moves Qi and Blood through them and relieves pain

Wind-Cold-Damp Bi and arthritic pain, especially of the shoulders
Cold congealing the Blood, with absent or painful periods, with or without abdominal masses, and other gynaecological problems

Unblocks Yang and transforms Qi and thin fluids

Edema from Cold-Phlegm or deficient Yang Qi, with difficult urination, dizziness and palpitations
Abdominal fullness and difficult urination when Yang and fluids stagnate

Assists Heart Yang and warms and unblocks the Yang Qi of the chest

Palpitations when Yang in the chest is obstructed, whether by stagnation or deficiency
Weak chest Yang letting Phlegm and thin fluids rise while Lung Qi fails to descend: short breath, pain in the chest and back, palpitations
Angina-like chest pain from Blood stasis
Deficient Yang of the Heart and Spleen

Warms the Middle Jiao and directs turbid Yin downward

Yang deficiency of the Middle Jiao
Heart and Spleen Yang deficiency, typically with a craving for sweet food

Ramulus Euonymi
Euonymi twig
Liver

Breaks up Blood stasis and unblocks menstruation

Traumatic injury
Irregular periods
Abdominal pain after childbirth arising from Wind-Damp

Kills parasites

Parasites causing abdominal pain

Eliminates Wind-toxin

Toxic Heat

Clears Heat, cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Heat in the Blood

hai dai

Bencao Index

hai feng teng

Bencao Index

hai fu shi

Bencao Index

hai gou shen

Bencao Index

Caulis Piperis Kadsurae
Kadsura Pepper Stem
Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp and unblocks the channels and collaterals

Wind-Cold-Damp Bi: stiff joints, aching lower back and knees, and cramped muscles and sinews

Relaxes the sinews, disperses Cold and relieves pain

Cold invading the Spleen and Stomach
Pain after trauma
Wind-Damp obstruction marked by cramping, tightness and limited movement more than by swollen joints

Stomach · Bladder · Kidney · Liver

Softens hardness, transforms Phlegm and dissipates nodules

Goiter
Scrofula and Phlegm nodules in the neck
Tumors, nodules and abdominal masses

Promotes urination and reduces edema (mild)

Edema
Swelling of leg Qi (beriberi) type

Clears Phlegm-Heat, stops cough, moistens dryness, nourishes fluids and benefits the Kidneys

Testes et Penis Callorhini
ursine seal's testes and penis
Kidney

Warms the Kidneys and tonifies Yang

Kidney Yang deficiency
Impotence or other sexual problems
Premature ejaculation
Weak lower back and knees from Kidney deficiency

Nourishes Essence and marrow

Deficient Kidney Essence and marrow

Pumex
pumex
Lung

Clears Lung Heat and transforms Phlegm

Heat lodged in the Lungs with thick sputum that is hard to cough up, or with coughing of blood, mostly in long-standing cases

Softens hardness and dissipates Phlegm nodules

Scrofula and similar lumps from Phlegm-Fire

Promotes urination and opens the upper source of water (the Lungs)

Stone Lin: hot, painful urination with stones
Painful urination

hai jin sha

Bencao Index

hai piao xiao

Bencao Index

hai shen

Bencao Index

hai tong pi

Bencao Index

Endoconcha Sepiae
Cuttle Fish Bone
Stomach · Kidney · Liver

Restrains leakage and stops bleeding
Bleeding of many kinds, particularly from deficiency
Uterine bleeding (Beng Lou), classically with Qian Cao Gen
Vomiting of blood and nosebleed
Bleeding wounds, dusted on as a powder

Secures Jing and stops discharge
Kidney deficiency with nocturnal emissions, spermatorrhea, premature ejaculation or vaginal discharge
Vaginal discharge from a wide range of causes

Controls acidity and relieves pain
Excess stomach acid with epigastric pain, sour belching or reflux; paired with Zhe Bei Mu as Wu Bei San

Dries Damp and promotes healing of sores (moves Blood)
Chronic ulcers that will not heal, long-standing Damp rashes, eczema and weeping sores, applied as a fine powder

Cortex Erythrinae
coral-bean bark
Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp and unblocks the channels and collaterals
Wind-Damp Bi where the knees and lumbar region ache and hurt
Painful spasms of the limbs and joints

Promotes urination and reduces edema
Superficial edema from Damp

Relieves itching and kills parasites
Scabies and other itchy skin lesions, applied externally

Relieves toothache from dental caries
Toothache from decayed teeth, used as a mouth rinse

Lygodii Spora
Japanese climbing fern spore
Small Intestine · Bladder

Clears Heat, promotes urination, relieves painful urinary dysfunction and expels stones
Damp-Heat Lin of any kind, above all Stone Lin and Blood Lin
Urinary stones, burning or cloudy urination, blood in the urine and dribbling
Gallstones

Clears Damp-Heat, reduces edema and relieves jaundice
Swelling with abdominal fullness or bloating from Spleen Damp
Jaundice from Damp-Heat

Tonifies Kidney Yang and augments Essence
Kidney deficiency with aging: impotence, nocturnal emission, weak or frequent urination, and a sore, weak lower back

Nourishes Blood and Yin
Depleted Essence and Blood showing as general weakness; moistening rather than drying, unlike many Yang tonics

Moistens dryness of the Intestines
Constipation from Blood or Yin deficiency, as in older people or after childbirth

Stops bleeding
Bleeding from injury
Coughing or vomiting of blood
Blood in the stool

hai zao

Bencao Index

han fang ji

Bencao Index

han lian cao

Bencao Index

han shui shi

Bencao Index

Radix Stephaniae Tetrandrae
Stephania Root
Spleen · Bladder · Kidney

Promotes urination and reduces edema, especially in the lower body

Water and Damp collecting in the Lower Jiao: swollen legs, damp leg Qi, gurgling intestines, abdominal distension or ascites

Expels Wind-Damp, clears Damp-Heat and relieves pain

Wind-Damp-Heat Bi, with fever and joints that are red, hot, swollen and painful; its cold nature suits hot joints where warm herbs would not

Cramps and pain in the feet and hands

Sargassum
Sargassum
Lung · Stomach · Kidney · Liver

Transforms Phlegm, softens hardness and dissipates nodules

Phlegm nodules of the neck such as goiter, scrofula and tumors

Swellings of the neck and lymph nodes, typically with Kun Bu

and other herbs that resolve Phlegm and soften hardness

Abdominal masses and carbuncles

Bulging disorders, above all of the scrotum and testes

Promotes urination and reduces edema

Floating edema, or edema from leg Qi

Orchitis

Glauberitum
Calcitum
Stomach · Heart · Kidney

Clears Heat and drains Fire at the Yang Ming stage or Qi level

Yang Ming or Qi-level Heat with a high fever, a yellow coat on the tongue, thirst and irritability

Clears Summerheat

Summerheat with the same high fever, thirst and irritability

Clears Heat and toxicity; used externally for burns and sores

Burns, scalds and inflamed sores, dusted with the powder

Red, inflamed eyes from Wind-Heat, applied topically

Swollen tonsils, a sore throat or ulcers in the mouth

Promotes urination and reduces edema

Edema, and absence of urine

Directs Fire downward and softens hardness

Painful swelling of the throat or gums

Clumping in the abdomen

Nourishes Liver and Kidney Yin

Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency with dizziness, vertigo and blurred vision

Premature greying of the hair

Sore, weak lower back and knees

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Bleeding from Heat in the vessels

Coughing or vomiting blood

Nosebleed

Uterine bleeding

Blood in urine or stool

Purpura and bleeding beneath the skin

he huan hua

Bencao Index

he huan pi

Bencao Index

he shou wu

Bencao Index

he ye

Bencao Index

Cortex Albiziae
albizia
Heart · Liver

Calms the Shen and relieves constraint
Emotional constraint or stagnant Liver Qi with a short temper, low mood, poor sleep, irritability and forgetfulness

Invigorates and harmonises the Blood, relieves pain and knits sinews and bones
Pain and swelling after trauma, fractures included (a mild effect)

Regulates Qi, relieves pain, reduces swelling and heals abscesses
Painful, swollen abscesses and sores, internal or external

Flos Albiziae
Albizia Flower
Stomach · Liver

Spreads constrained Liver Qi, moves Qi in the collaterals, harmonises the Stomach and calms the Shen
Pent-up emotions causing insomnia, forgetfulness and irritability, particularly with epigastric pain and a sense of pressure in the chest
Constrained Liver Qi: tightness across the chest and flanks, a low mood, and an inner knot of unease that does not let go
Low mood, anxiety and unease from bottled-up feelings
Insomnia and poor memory rooted in emotional constraint rather than Blood or Yin deficiency

Folium Nelumbinis
Lotus Leaf
Spleen · Heart · Liver

Clears Summerheat
Summerheat, with or without Damp: fever, thirst, irritability, profuse sweating, scanty urine and, above all, diarrhea

Raises and clears Spleen Yang
Diarrhea from deficient Spleen Yang, typically in the wake of Summerheat
Lifting the Qi while recovering from a Summerheat illness

Removes stagnation and stops bleeding (charred form, He Ye Tan)
Bleeding in the Lower Jiao from Heat or stagnation
Vomiting of blood, as a supporting herb

Radix Polygoni Multiflora
Fleeceflower Root
Large Intestine · Heart · Liver

Tonifies the Liver and Kidneys and nourishes Blood and Jing (prepared, Zhi He Shou Wu)
Deficient Blood: dizziness, blurred vision, poor sleep, hair greying early
Deficient Yin: weak, painful lower back and knees, aching limbs, insomnia and nocturnal emissions
Jing deficiency
Leakage such as nocturnal emission, spermatorrhea or vaginal discharge, which its astringency checks without being cloying

Expels Wind from the skin by nourishing Blood (prepared)
Wind rash or itching arising from Blood deficiency or Blood dryness
Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels (raw, Sheng He Shou Wu)
Dry constipation from Blood deficiency, including in weak or elderly people

Resolves Fire toxin and reduces nodules (raw)
Carbuncles, sores and abscesses, scrofula, goiter and lumps in the neck (Chuang Yong), particularly where the Blood is too weak to support healing
Checks malaria (raw)
Malarial disorders with deficient Qi and Blood

he zi

Bencao Index

hei zhi ma

Bencao Index

hong da ji

Bencao Index

hong hua

Bencao Index

Semen Sesami Nigrum

black sesame

Large Intestine · Kidney · Liver

Nourishes Liver and Kidney Yin and tonifies Jing and Blood

Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency with blurred vision, dizziness and ringing in the ears
Hair turning grey too early
Convalescence after a serious or long illness
Too little breast milk

Nourishes Jing and Blood and extinguishes Wind

Headache, dizziness or numbness from Blood or Yin deficiency
Dizziness that worsens with exertion, in particular

Moistens the Intestines and Lungs

Dry, hard stools or constipation from dry Intestines or deficient Blood or Yin, rather than Heat or stagnation; gentle enough for the elderly, after childbirth and in the debilitated

Fructus Chebulae

Chebule

Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Astringes the Intestines and stops diarrhea

Long-standing diarrhea or dysentery, of Heat or Cold type, with gas and abdominal pain
Intestinal Wind with blood in the stool

Restrains leakage of Lung Qi, descends Lung Qi, stops cough, benefits the throat and eases Qi stagnation in the chest and diaphragm

Chronic cough and wheezing, including from Lung Qi deficiency
Loss of voice, hoarseness and sore throat, especially when chronic
Cough from Phlegm-Fire blocking the Lungs, in combination with other herbs

Flos Carthami

Safflower

Heart · Liver

Invigorates and nourishes Blood, dispels stasis, regulates menstruation and relieves pain

Blood stasis, especially gynaecological: abdominal pain, absent or painful periods, dizziness or pain after childbirth, retained lochia and abdominal masses
Traumatic injury
Sores and carbuncles that have not formed pus, and dark purple erythema
Measles rash that fails to come out fully
Chest Bi from Blood stasis

Opens the channels

Joint pain or paralysis from Blood stasis blocking the channels

Radix Knoxiae

Knoxia Root

Large Intestine · Spleen · Kidney

Drains water downward by purging

Severe edema, fluid in the chest or ascites with constipation and scanty urine, where milder diuretics are not enough

Resolves toxicity and reduces swelling

Carbuncles and toxic sores, taken internally or applied as a paste of the fresh root

Dissipates nodules and masses

Scrofula; comparative accounts rate it stronger than Jing Da Ji for this

hong jing tian

Bencao Index

hong teng

Bencao Index

hou po

Bencao Index

hu gu

Bencao Index

Caulis Sargentodoxae
sargent gloryvine stem
Large Intestine · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, reduces abscesses and relieves pain
Intestinal abscess marked by toxin, Heat and stagnation, such as a picture resembling appendicitis
Hot, swollen, painful skin lesions (Chuang Yong), treated internally or on the skin

Invigorates Blood, disperses stasis and relieves pain
Blood stagnation after trauma or sports injury, with sharp, fixed pain
Painful periods
Joint pain

Radix et Rhizoma Rhodiolae Crenulatae
gold theragran; integripetal rhodiola herb
Lung · Spleen · Heart · Kidney · Liver

Strengthens the Spleen and tonifies Qi
Spleen Qi deficiency

Clears Lung Heat, nourishes Lung Yin and stops cough
Cough from Lung Heat, including cough with pneumonia
Vomiting or coughing up blood
Lung Yin deficiency
Tuberculosis
Bronchitis

Invigorates Blood and transforms stasis
Blood stasis from traumatic injury, applied topically
Burns and scalds, applied topically

Promotes contraction
Abnormal vaginal discharge

Os Tigridis
tiger bone
Kidney · Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp, relieves pain and strengthens the sinews and bones
Wind-Damp Bi with wasted, weak lower back and legs, stiff joints, wandering pain, leg spasms and difficulty moving the joints
Severe, wandering joint pain, classically used when ordinary Wind-Damp herbs were thought too weak

Disperses Wind-Cold
Cold pain deep in the bones, spasms or paralysis from Wind-Cold Bi

Cortex Magnoliae Officinalis
Magnolia Bark
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen

Moves Qi in the Middle Jiao and resolves stagnation, including food stagnation
Qi and food stagnation in the Spleen and Stomach, with a distended, full chest or abdomen
Bloating and constipation, with a slow digestion and little appetite
Plum-pit throat

Moves Qi downward, warms and dries Damp and transforms Phlegm
Damp or Phlegm blocking the Middle Jiao: distension and fullness, nausea or vomiting, poor appetite, diarrhea and a greasy, turbid tongue coat

Descends rebellious Qi, reduces Phlegm and calms wheezing
Cough, wheezing and breathlessness when copious Phlegm congests the Lungs and chest

hu huang lian

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hu ji sheng

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hu jiao

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hu lu

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Herba Visci
colored mistletoe
Kidney · Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp, tonifies the Liver and Kidneys and strengthens the sinews and bones

- Dizziness
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Sore, weak lower back and knees
- Weak sinews and bones

Prevents miscarriage

- Uterine bleeding, whether heavy or a steady trickle
- Threatened miscarriage

Rhizoma Picrorhizae
figwort flower
Large Intestine · Stomach · Liver

Clears deficiency Heat

- Heat signs from Yin deficiency, such as steaming bones or afternoon fever

Clears Heat and reduces childhood nutritional impairment

- Childhood nutritional impairment with a swollen belly, afternoon fever, hemorrhoids and dysenteric diarrhea
- Accumulation with Heat in a child: poor absorption, irritability, fever and a full abdomen

Drains Damp-Heat

- Damp-Heat dysentery, diarrhea, hemorrhoids or sores

Fructus Lagenariae
bottle gourd
Lung · Spleen · Kidney

Promotes urination and reduces swelling

- Edema
- Jaundice
- Diabetes
- Urinary retention
- Carbuncles and malignant boils
- Scabies

Fructus Piperis
Pepper
Large Intestine · Stomach

Warms the Middle Jiao, disperses Cold and relieves pain

- Cold in the Stomach and Spleen causing epigastric or abdominal pain

Stops vomiting

- Vomiting of Cold type, including of clear, watery fluid; for severe cases, combined with warming herbs that descend Stomach Qi such as fresh ginger

Stops diarrhea

- Diarrhea when Cold settles in the Large Intestine
- Chronic diarrhea without infection, using a warming powder plaster over the navel

Resolves Phlegm and moves food stagnation

- Food or Phlegm accumulating after exposure to cold

hu lu ba

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hu po

Bencao Index

hu tao ren

Bencao Index

hu zhang

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Succinum
Amber
Heart · Bladder · Liver

Settles palpitations, stops tremors and spasms, and calms the Shen

- Disturbed Shen with palpitations and anxiety, heavy dreaming, insomnia, forgetfulness or seizures
- Convulsions and seizures in children from Heart Blood deficiency with internal Wind
- Epilepsy

Invigorates Blood, dissipates stasis and unblocks menstruation

- Amenorrhea, or pain with fixed, palpable masses, from Blood stasis; may be used alone
- Coronary artery disease, supporting the Heart alongside other Blood-moving herbs

Promotes urination and relieves painful urinary dysfunction

- Urinary retention or painful urination, especially Blood Lin with blood in the urine

Reduces swelling and promotes healing (topical)

- Sores, carbuncles and skin ulcers, dusted with the powder
- Painful swellings of the vulva or scrotum

Semen Trigonellae
Common Fenugreek Seed
Kidney

Warms the Kidneys and strengthens Yang

- Deficient Kidney Yang: cold hands and feet, with an aching, weak and cold lumbar region

Disperses Cold and Damp and relieves pain

- Deficient Kidney Yang with Cold or stagnant Qi collecting, bringing distension and pain of the abdomen or flanks, or bulging disorders
- Cold Shan Qi, in which Cold stagnates in the Liver channel and the testicles and lower abdomen hurt
- Cold-Damp leg Qi, with legs that are sore, heavy, numb or swollen

Rhizoma Polygoni Cuspidati
Bushy Knotweed Rhizome
Lung · Gallbladder · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis, unblocks the channels and relieves pain

- Amenorrhea or painful periods from Blood stasis
- Abdominal pain after childbirth
- Pain from traumatic injury
- Wind-Damp Bi with joint pain

Clears Heat and resolves Damp

- Jaundice from Damp-Heat
- Cloudy vaginal discharge from Damp-Heat
- Turbid, painful urination (Lin syndrome)

Clears toxins and reduces swelling

- Toxic sores, carbuncles, burns and scalds, used internally or on the skin

Drains Heat, transforms Phlegm and stops cough

- Cough from Heat or Phlegm in the Lungs, including chronic cough
- Constipation from knotted Heat

Semen Juglandis
Walnut
Lung · Large Intestine · Kidney

Tonifies the Kidneys, replenishes Jing and strengthens the lower back and knees

- Kidney Yang deficiency: a cold, aching, weak lower back and knees, cold limbs and frequent urination
- Kidney Jing deficiency

Warms and astringes the Lungs, resolves Cold Phlegm, calms wheezing and helps the Kidneys grasp Qi

- Deficient Lungs and Kidneys with chronic cough, wheezing or asthma made worse by any exertion
- Kidneys failing to anchor the Lung Qi

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

- Dry constipation from deficient fluids and Blood, relieved without the harshness of a purgative
- Constipation in older or depleted people
- Constipation after a febrile illness has damaged the fluids

hua jiao

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hua rui shi

Bencao Index

hua shi

Bencao Index

huai jiao

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Ophicalcitum
Ophicalcite
Liver

Stops bleeding, invigorates Blood and transforms stasis

- Vomiting or coughing of blood where stasis is part of the picture; especially valued for vomiting of blood with stasis
- Internal Blood stasis
- Bleeding from injury, internal or external, with the powder applied directly to wounds and sores
- Uterine bleeding
- Blood stasis after childbirth with dizziness or fainting, or a retained placenta

Pericarpium Zanthoxyli
pricklyash peel
Stomach · Spleen · Kidney

Warms the Middle Jiao, disperses Cold, dispels Damp, stops diarrhea and relieves pain

- Abdominal cold and pain, vomiting and diarrhea from deficiency
 - Cold of the Spleen and Stomach
- Kills parasites and relieves abdominal pain**
- Roundworms causing abdominal pain
 - Moist ulcers of the skin

Fructus Sophorae
Japanese pagoda tree pod
Large Intestine · Gallbladder · Liver

Directs Heat downward, cools the Blood and stops bleeding, and moistens the Intestines

- Swollen, bleeding hemorrhoids from Heat
- Blood in the stool or urine from Heat
- Constipation with Heat

Clears Liver Fire, nourishes the Liver, brightens the eyes and lowers blood pressure

- Liver Fire with headache, dizziness and red eyes, frequently alongside high blood pressure

Talcum
Talcum
Stomach · Bladder

Promotes urination, drains Heat from the Bladder and expels Damp-Heat (helps pass gravel and stones)

- Heat Lin: hot, burning, painful urination that is dark, scanty or dribbling, often with thirst
- Diarrhea from Damp-Heat
- Damp-Heat at the Qi level: a fever that will not break, a heavy body, thirst and a yellow tongue coat

Clears Summerheat and resolves Damp

- Summerheat with Damp: fever and thirst, restlessness, watery stools, and urine that is scanty and hard to pass

Absorbs Damp and clears Heat (topical)

- Eczema, damp sores, damp rashes and prickly heat, dusted on as a fine powder

Stops bleeding due to Heat

- Bleeding of Heat type

huai mi

Bencao Index

huai niu xi

Bencao Index

huang bai

Bencao Index

huang gou shen

Bencao Index

Radix Achyranthis Bidentatae

Achyranthes Root

Kidney · Liver

Invigorates Blood and dispels Blood stasis

- Painful, absent or irregular periods from Blood stasis
- Lochia retained after childbirth
- Pain from traumatic injury
- Other pain arising from Blood stasis

Tonifies Liver and Kidney Yin, strengthens the sinews and bones and benefits the joints

- Sore, aching lower back and knees when the Liver and Kidneys are depleted
- Long-standing weakness and soreness of the lower back and knees
- Wind-Damp Bi affecting the lower body

Guides Blood and Fire downward

- Heat in the Blood of the Upper Jiao, with nosebleed, vomiting of blood or bleeding gums
- Toothache from Empty Fire flaring on a base of Yin deficiency
- Dizziness, headache and blurred vision from Liver Fire, or from Liver Yang rising on deficient Yin

Clears Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao and promotes urination

- Knee pain, or painful obstruction of the lower back, when Damp-Heat sinks downward
- Lin (painful urinary dysfunction) or leukorrhea, in a supporting role
- Stone Lin with blood in the urine and pain in the lower back

Flos Sophorae Immaturus

Sophora Bud

Large Intestine · Liver

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

- Large Intestine Damp-Heat causing bleeding, above all from hemorrhoids or with bloody dysentery
- Coughing up blood, nosebleed or uterine bleeding when Heat is in the Blood

Cools the Liver

- Liver Heat with headache, dizziness and red eyes

Testis et Penis Canis

dog's testes and penis

Kidney

Tonifies the Kidneys and fortifies Yang

- Kidney Yang deficiency

Cortex Phellodendri

amur cork-tree bark

Bladder · Kidney

Drains Damp-Heat, particularly from the Lower Jiao

- Lower Jiao Damp-Heat
- Vaginal discharge that is thick, yellow and foul-smelling
- Diarrhea or dysentery with a foul odour
- Jaundice from Damp-Heat
- Acute urinary tract infection
- Hot Leg Qi: knees, legs or feet that are red, hot, swollen and painful as Damp-Heat pours downward

Drains Kidney Fire from deficiency

- Empty Fire flaring from deficient Kidney Yin: steaming bone, night sweats, afternoon fever with sweating, and at times nocturnal emissions or spermatorrhea

Drains Fire and resolves Fire toxicity

- Toxic sores, abscesses and boils, used internally or applied topically
- Damp, weeping skin lesions such as eczema

huang jing

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huang lian

Bencao Index

huang qi

Bencao Index

huang qin

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Rhizoma Coptidis
coptis
Large Intestine · Stomach · Heart · Liver

Clears Heat and drains Damp, especially from the Stomach and Intestines
Diarrhea or dysentery from Damp-Heat in the Intestines or Stomach
Enteritis, acute gastroenteritis, cholera and typhoid fever
Vaginal infection
Staphylococcal infection
Vomiting or acid regurgitation from Stomach Heat

Drains Fire and resolves toxicity
Toxic Heat with blazing Fire: a high fever with delirium or confusion and irritability, a red tongue, and a pulse that is rapid and full
Excess Heat with toxicity in the eyes, ears and throat: sore red eyes, ear infection and sore throat
Boils, carbuncles, abscesses and toxic sores (Chuang Yung)

Clears Heat and stops bleeding
Bleeding driven by Heat in the Blood: nosebleed, and blood in the sputum, vomit, urine or stool

Clears Heat when applied topically
Infected wounds, sore red eyes, and ulcers of the mouth and tongue, as a powder or wash

Clears Heart Fire and calms the mind
Heart Fire
Heart and Kidneys failing to communicate, with irritability and insomnia, as in Huang Lian E Jiao Tang with E Jiao and egg yolk

Drains Stomach Fire
Stomach Fire causing halitosis and belching with a foul smell

Radix Scutellariae
Scutellaria
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach · Gallbladder

Clears Heat and dries Damp
Diarrhea or dysentery from Damp-Heat in the Intestines or Stomach, which may come with high fever
Damp-Warm illness: fever, an oppressive feeling in the chest, and thirst with little wish to drink
Painful urinary dysfunction from Lower Jiao Damp-Heat
Jaundice from Damp-Heat, including infectious hepatitis, combined with other herbs

Drains Fire and resolves toxicity
Fire and Heat in the Upper Jiao, above all the Lungs: high fever, thirst, irritability, and a cough bringing up thick yellow sputum
Upper respiratory infection
Hot sores and swellings, taken internally or applied topically

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding
Bleeding from Heat at the Blood (Xue) level: nosebleed, coughing or vomiting of blood, and blood in the stool

Clears Heat and calms the fetus
Restless fetus or threatened miscarriage caused by Heat

Calms rising Liver Yang
Liver Yang rising with headache, a flushed face and red eyes, irritability and a bitter taste
High blood pressure
Gallbladder Heat

Rhizoma Polygonati
polygonati rhizome
Lung · Spleen · Kidney

Tonifies Spleen Qi and nourishes Stomach Yin
Weak Qi of the Spleen and Stomach with tiredness, low energy and poor appetite
Stomach Yin deficiency: dry mouth, poor appetite, reduced sense of taste, dry stools and a red tongue
Abdominal distension from Qi stagnation alongside deficient Stomach Yin

Moistens the Lungs and nourishes Lung Yin
Dry cough with scanty sputum from deficient Lung Qi and Yin
Consumptive cough
Cough of any kind where Dryness predominates

Tonifies the Kidneys, augments Jing and relieves wasting and thirsting
Depleted Kidney Yin and Jing: lower back pain, light-headedness and weak legs
Wasting and thirsting disorder (Xiao Ke)

Radix Astragali
Astragalus Root
Lung · Spleen

Tonifies Qi and Blood
Qi and Blood deficiency with tiredness, a sallow face, dizziness, reluctance to speak, palpitations and low-grade fever
Fever after childbirth from depleted Qi and Blood
Convalescence after heavy blood loss

Strengthens the Spleen and raises Yang Qi
Weak Spleen Qi with poor appetite, fatigue and loose stools
Sinking Middle Qi with prolapse of the rectum or uterus
Spleen Qi unable to hold Blood in the vessels, with easy bruising or bleeding
Deficient Qi of both the Lungs and the Spleen
Fever from Qi deficiency

Tonifies Wei Qi, secures the Exterior and strengthens the Lungs
Spontaneous sweating from weak Wei Qi
Catching colds easily and shortness of breath from deficient Lung Qi
Excessive sweating in Qi, Yang or Yin deficiency
Cough or wheezing with thin white phlegm from Lung and Spleen deficiency
Damp accumulating in the head

Promotes urination and reduces edema
Edema from Spleen deficiency, or puffiness of the face and limbs with scanty urine; may be used alone for this

Expels pus and generates flesh
Chronic sores and ulcers that are slow to form pus, slow to drain or slow to heal

Generates Fluids and treats wasting and thirsting disorder
Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder) with thirst and fatigue

Relieves numbness and pain
Numbness, pain or paralysis of the limbs when Qi and Blood fail to nourish them
Bi syndrome with numb limbs

huang yao zi

Bencao Index

huo ma ren

Bencao Index

huo xiang

Bencao Index

ji guan hua

Bencao Index

Semen Cannabis
Hemp Seeds
Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen

Nourishes and moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

- Constipation in older or debilitated people
- Constipation following a warm febrile illness
- Constipation after childbirth
- Constipation from Blood deficiency

Nourishes Yin

- Constipation with mild Yin deficiency

Clears Heat and helps sores heal

- Sores and ulcers, as a supporting herb taken internally or applied topically

Moistens Dryness and benefits the hair

- Dry hair, and to encourage hair growth

Rhizoma Dioscoreae Bulbiferae
airpotato yam
Lung · Liver

Transforms Phlegm, dissipates nodules and reduces masses

- Goiter; can be given alone as a tincture
- Lumps and swellings of the thyroid and neck regarded as accumulated Phlegm

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity

- Toxic swellings, scrofula, a sore swollen throat and animal bites, applied topically
- Snake bite, only as an emergency measure; it is no substitute for antivenom
- Tumours, particularly of the esophagus, stomach, uterus, colon, liver and thyroid, as used in modern Chinese practice; this records the use, not proof of benefit

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

- Vomiting or coughing up blood, nosebleed and uterine bleeding

Stops cough and calms wheezing

- Cough in acute or chronic bronchitis
- Whooping cough
- Asthma and breathlessness

Flos Celosiae Cristatae
cockscorn
Large Intestine · Liver

Restrains leakage to stop bleeding and vaginal discharge

- Bleeding and other discharges of many kinds from the Lower Jiao

Clears Heat, cools the Blood, binds the Intestines and stops bleeding

- Dysentery, particularly when long-standing or with blood in the stool

Consolidates Jing and stops diarrhea

- Vaginal discharge, diarrhea or dysentery

Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Aromatically transforms Damp, releases the Exterior and expels Summerheat

- Turbid Damp blocking the Middle Jiao
- Summerheat with Damp
- Damp-Warm illness
- Wind-Damp
- Summer-Damp lodged in the Spleen and Stomach: a full, distended epigastrium and abdomen, poor appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and a greasy tongue coat, often with mild chills from the Exterior

Harmonises the Middle Jiao, awakens the Spleen and stops vomiting

- Nausea or vomiting when Damp obstructs the Middle Jiao
- Vomiting of other kinds, including morning sickness, in suitable combinations

Treats skin disorders and fungal infection

- Skin conditions and fungal infections of the hands or feet, applied topically

ji mu

Bencao Index

ji nei jin

Bencao Index

ji xue cao

Bencao Index

ji xue teng

Bencao Index

Endothelium Corneum Gigeriae Galli
chicken gizzard lining
Stomach · Spleen · Small Intestine · Bladder

Strongly reduces Food stagnation and strengthens the Spleen's transporting function

- Food accumulating in the digestive tract
- Food stagnation arising from Spleen deficiency; strong in action yet still suitable where the Spleen is weak
- Indigestion with fullness and distension of the epigastrium and abdomen
- Childhood nutritional impairment

Secures Jing, holds in urine and stops enuresis

- Bedwetting, frequent urination and incontinence
- Spermatorrhea or seminal emission
- Cloudy urine

Transforms hardness and dissolves stones

- Stones of the urinary tract or gallbladder

Flos Loropetali Chinensis
Chinese loropetalum flower

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity

- Diarrhea

Invigorates Blood and dispels Blood stasis

- Blood stasis

Astringes to stop bleeding

- Bleeding

Caulis Spatholobi
Spatholobus Root And Vine
Spleen · Heart · Liver

Invigorates and tonifies Blood

- Painful, irregular or absent periods with abdominal pain, from Blood deficiency
- Menstrual disorders from Blood stasis, Blood deficiency or both together, since it builds Blood while moving it

Opens the channels and relaxes the sinews

- Wind-Damp Bi complicated by Blood deficiency or stasis: numb limbs, aching lower back or knees, and joints that are sore all over
- Weakness of the limbs in older people
- Paralysis or vertigo from Blood stasis or Wind-stroke
- Numbness or weakness of the limbs after Wind-stroke where stasis and deficiency exist together

Herba Centellae
asiatic pennywort
Lung · Large Intestine · Spleen · Small Intestine · Bladder · Kidney · Liver

Clears Heat, promotes urination, reduces swelling and resolves toxicity

- Dysentery, and jaundice from Damp-Heat
- Sores, abscesses and boils
- Traumatic injury
- Blood in the urine, and nosebleed
- Urinary stones
- Sore throat, rubella and conjunctivitis (pinkeye)
- Scabies
- Diarrhea from Summerheat
- Abdominal pain with an eruptive disease

Invigorates Blood, reduces swelling and relieves pain

- Traumatic injuries

Clears Damp-Heat

- Enteritis
- Abdominal pain

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

- Bleeding from Heat in the Blood, including vomiting or coughing up blood

Clears the Liver and brightens the eyes

- Night blindness in children
- Eye inflammation
- Cataract and glaucoma

ji zi huang

Bencao Index

jiang can

Bencao Index

jiang huang

Bencao Index

jiang xiang

Bencao Index

Bombyx Batryticatus
Silkworm
Lung · Liver

Extinguishes Wind, stops spasms and convulsions, and transforms Phlegm

- Convulsions in children
- Facial paralysis with the eye and mouth pulled to one side, from Wind-Phlegm
- Seizures from Liver Wind, and above all from Wind-Phlegm-Heat

Dispels Wind, disperses Wind-Heat, and relieves itching and pain

- Wind-Heat contracted from outside, or Liver Wind, with headache, red eyes, a swollen sore throat, and itchy skin eruptions such as Wind rash
- Hoarseness or loss of voice

Transforms Phlegm, softens hardness, resolves toxicity and dissipates nodules

- Scrofula (Luo Li), goiter and other Phlegm nodules from Phlegm-Heat

Heart · Kidney

Nourishes Yin, tonifies Blood and moistens Dryness

- Restlessness and insomnia
- Indigestion, vomiting and dysentery
- Coughing up blood, and blood in the stool
- Vaginal bleeding during pregnancy
- Scalds and boils
- Indigestion in infants

Extinguishes Wind

- Convulsions
- Eczema

Lignum Dalbergiae Odoriferae
Dalbergia Heartwood
Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Dispels Blood stasis and stops bleeding

- Internal injury from trauma, such as fractures, sprains and contusions, with swelling, bruising and pain
- Bleeding from cuts, applied topically on its own or with other herbs
- Bleeding with stasis, such as vomiting dark clotted blood or a nosebleed after injury; bleeding from Heat or deficiency needs other herbs

Invigorates Blood, moves Qi and relieves pain

- Pain in the epigastrium and abdomen when Spleen and Stomach Qi stagnates
- Chest pain from Blood stasis
- Fixed, stabbing pain in the chest or flanks from stagnant Qi and Blood, including angina-type chest pain

Harmonises the Middle Jiao, descends Qi and resolves turbidity

- Nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain when Damp accumulates or turbid Damp blocks the Middle Jiao, often paired with aromatic herbs such as Huo Xiang

Rhizoma Curcumae Longae
Turmeric Rhizome
Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels Blood stasis and promotes menstruation

- Blood stasis
- Chest or abdominal pain and menstrual disorders when Blood stasis arises from Deficiency Cold
- Irregular or painful periods
- Traumatic injury with swelling and pain

Moves Qi, opens the channels and collaterals and relieves pain

- Epigastric and abdominal pain from constrained Liver Qi or other Qi stagnation

Expels Wind and invigorates Blood

- Bi pain from Wind, Cold and Damp with Blood stasis, felt mostly in the shoulders, arms and upper back

Reduces swelling

- Painful swollen sores and lesions from accumulated toxic Heat with stagnant Qi and Blood

jiao gu lan

Bencao Index

jie geng

Bencao Index

jin guo lan

Bencao Index

jin meng shi

Bencao Index

Radix Platycodi
Platycodon Root
Lung

Opens and disseminates Lung Qi, expels Phlegm and benefits the throat

- Cough with copious sputum, sore throat or loss of voice, in either Wind-Cold or Wind-Heat patterns
- Wheezing or asthma
- Hoarseness or sore throat from external Heat, Phlegm-Heat or Heat from deficient Yin

Expels pus

- Abscess of the Lung or throat from stagnant Phlegm and Qi: fever, chest pain, cough bringing up thick yellow sputum or blood and pus, with a fishy smell
- Lung carbuncle

Raises Lung and Large Intestine Qi

- Sunken Qi patterns such as diarrhea, tenesmus, anuria or edema

Guides other herbs to the upper body

- As a messenger herb, carries a formula's action up to the Lungs and throat and reinforces the other herbs there

Gynostemma Pentaphllum
Gynostemma
Lung · Heart

Tonifies Qi, moistens the Lungs, generates Fluids and dispels Phlegm

- Long-standing conditions of a deficient nature, including asthma, migraine and neuralgia
- Weak breathing or digestion from deficiency, with nausea, vomiting, breathlessness and a congested chest

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, reduces swelling and inflammation, and relieves pain

- Stomach and duodenal ulcers
- Raised blood lipids
- Nodules
- Cystitis
- Shingles (herpes zoster)
- Cancers

Lowers blood pressure and cholesterol

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol

Lapis Micae Aureus
mica-schist

Descends Qi and transforms Phlegm

- Cough and laboured breathing with phlegm that is hard to bring up
- Stubborn, lodged phlegm that has not responded to milder Phlegm-transforming herbs

Calms the Liver and stops convulsions

- Seizures, convulsions or epilepsy from hot Phlegm in the Liver clouding the orifices, with high fever, delirium, palpitations and loss of consciousness

Radix Tinosporae
tinospora root
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach · Heart

Clears Heat, soothes the throat, resolves toxicity and relieves pain

- Heat in the throat with soreness, swelling or abscess, cough, loss of voice or acute laryngitis
- Mouth ulcers (aphthae) and conjunctivitis
- Stomach Heat with abdominal pain, diarrhea or vomiting
- Nosebleed
- Skin conditions treated topically: cellulitis, carbuncles, boils, sores, ulcers and toxins from incised wounds
- Snake bites and bites from mosquitoes or other insects, applied topically

jīn qián cǎo

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jīn qiào mǎi

Bencao Index

jīn shā téng

Bencao Index

jīn yīn huà

Bencao Index

Rhizoma Fagopyri Dibotryis
wild buckwheat
Lung · Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity

- Snake bites
- Dysentery

Clears the Lungs and transforms Phlegm

- Lung Heat with cough and gasping breath
- Swollen, painful or sore throat
- Lung abscess

Invigorates Blood and resolves carbuncles

- Traumatic injury
- Painful periods
- Abdominal pain after childbirth

Expels Wind and eliminates Damp

- Rheumatism and rheumatic arthritis

Herba Lysimachiae
christina loosestrife
Bladder · Kidney · Gallbladder · Liver

Promotes urination, relieves painful urinary dysfunction and expels urinary stones

- Lin (painful urinary dysfunction), including painful dribbling urination with Damp-Heat signs
- Stones of the kidney, bladder or urinary tract; can be given on its own

Clears Damp-Heat from the Liver and Gallbladder and expels gallstones

- Liver and Gallbladder Damp-Heat with jaundice, red swollen eyes or gallstones
- Hepatitis showing Damp-Heat signs

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity and reduces swelling

- Snakebite, abscesses, sores, swellings and traumatic injury, with the fresh herb applied topically

Flos Lonicerae
Honeysuckle Flower
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Clears Heat and resolves Fire toxicity

- Hot, painful, swollen sores, boils and skin eruptions at any stage, often with fever, especially of the breast (mastitis), throat or eyes
- Infections, including herpes simplex
- Intestinal abscess, carbuncles, abscesses, pimples and toxic sores (Chuang Yung)

Vents and disperses Wind-Heat from the Exterior

- Onset of Wind-Heat or Warm disease, such as a common cold, with headache, a sore throat, fever and chills, and mild dislike of Wind
- Summerheat from the Exterior

Clears Damp-Heat from the Lower Jiao

- Lower Jiao Damp-Heat with dysentery, diarrhea or Lin syndrome
- Abscess of the Intestines from Damp-Heat

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding (charred)

- Dysentery with Blood Heat
- Heat that has reached the Ying or Blood level in Warm disease, within combined formulas

Herba Lygodii
Japanese climbing fern
Small Intestine · Bladder

Promotes urination and clears Heat

- Damp-Heat urinary disorder with burning, difficult urination
- Blood in the urine
- Painful urination from stones (Stone Lin)

Clears Fire toxin

- Mumps
- Sore throat with heat and swelling

jīn yīng zì

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jīng dà jì

Bencao Index

jīng jiē

Bencao Index

jiǔ cài zì

Bencao Index

Drives out water by purging

Severe edema, ascites or fluid in the chest, only in a true Excess pattern with a robust constitution; its purging and diuretic effect is violent

Drains fluid collecting in the chest and flanks

Phlegm-fluid under the ribs with fullness, hardness and pain

Reduces swelling and dissipates nodules

Toxic swellings and sores (historical use)
Scrofula (historical use); Hong Da Ji is considered the stronger of the two for this

Fructus Rosae Laevigatae

cherokee rose fruit

Large Intestine · Bladder · Kidney

Stabilises the Kidneys, binds Jing and reduces urination

An unstable, deficient Lower Jiao with spermatorrhea, urinary incontinence or vaginal discharge
Seminal emission, bedwetting and frequent urination when Kidney deficiency leaves the Jing gate unstable

Binds and stabilises to stop vaginal discharge

Long-term vaginal discharge, watery or turbid, when the Spleen and Kidneys are weak

Astringes the Intestines and stops diarrhea

Long-standing diarrhea or dysentery, especially with weak Spleen and Kidneys

Semen Allii Tuberosi

tuber onion seed

Kidney · Liver

Tonifies the Liver, warms the Kidneys, strengthens Yang and secures Jing

Impotence, with a sore, cold and weak lower back and knees, from Kidney Yang deficiency
Spermatorrhea, nocturnal emission or premature ejaculation
Bedwetting, urinary incontinence, frequent urination or dribbling when Kidney Yang fails to hold
Vaginal discharge that is clear, thin, cold in nature and without odour, from Kidney Yang deficiency

Warms the Stomach and settles long-standing rebellious Stomach Qi

Vomiting and stubborn, chronic hiccups from Cold in the Stomach

Herba Schizonepetae

schizonepeta

Lung · Liver

Releases the Exterior and expels Wind

Wind-Heat or Wind-Cold
An early common cold with headache, chills and fever, and body aches, whether it leans to Wind-Cold or Wind-Heat
Carbuncles or boils (Chuang Yung) just erupting, particularly with chills and fever

Vents rashes and relieves itching

Measles in the early stage, while the rash is still coming out
Itchy skin eruptions, including hives

Stops bleeding (charred, Jing Jie Tan)

Bleeding, as a supporting herb
Nosebleed, blood in the stool or uterine bleeding, especially bleeding of a superficial or Wind-related kind

Dispels Wind and relieves spasms

Spasms after childbirth, lockjaw, and cramps or spasms of the muscles from Wind

jiu xiang chong

Bencao Index

ju he

Bencao Index

ju hong

Bencao Index

ju hua

Bencao Index

Citri Reticulatae
Aged Tangerine Peel Seeds
Liver

Moves Qi and dissipates clumps
Shan Qi (hernial disorder) with pain of the small intestine region; its main use
Painful swelling of the testicles

Moves Qi and relieves pain
Breast pain with mastitis or breast nodules
Lower back pain

Aspongopus
stink-bug
Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Regulates Qi, soothes the Liver and relieves pain
Liver Qi stagnation
Distending pain in the chest, epigastrium, Lungs and Stomach when Cold causes Liver-Spleen disharmony

Replenishes Kidney Yang
Deficient Kidney Yang with impotence, low back pain and frequent urination

Replenishes Spleen Yang
Spleen Yang deficiency with poor transformation and transportation

Flos Chrysanthemi
Chrysanthemum Flower
Lung · Liver

Disperses Wind and clears Heat
Early Wind-Heat, as in a common cold or Warm disease, with fever, headache and a mild sore throat; classically paired with Sang Ye

Calms the Liver and brightens the eyes
Red, dry, swollen or painful eyes from Wind-Heat in the Liver channel or rising Liver Yang
Floaters, blurred vision or dizziness when Liver and Kidney Yin are depleted
Heatstroke on a background of Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency

Calms Liver Yang and extinguishes Wind
Liver Wind with headache, dizziness and deafness
Rising Liver Yang from deficient Liver and Kidney Yin
More severe internal Wind, combined with heavier anchoring herbs such as Ling Yang Jiao and Gou Teng
Hypertension

Resolves toxicity
Toxic sores and swellings, a minor use, mainly in the early stage

Moves Heart Qi and Blood and promotes circulation
Stagnant Qi and Blood of the Heart

Exocarpium Citri Reticulatae Rubrum
Tangerine Flavendo
Lung · Stomach

Regulates Qi, dries Damp and transforms Phlegm
Damp-Phlegm blocking the Lungs: cough with plenty of sputum, a stuffy, full chest and a greasy tongue coat

Harmonises the Middle Jiao and descends Qi
Vomiting, belching and fullness of the epigastrium where Damp and stagnant Qi are involved

jue ming zi

Bencao Index

ku lian pi

Bencao Index

ku shen

Bencao Index

kuan dong hua

Bencao Index

Cortex Meliae
Chinaberry Bark
Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Kills parasites

Roundworm, threadworm, hookworm and pinworm in the intestines
Trichomonas infection of the vagina
Strong and effective enough to be given alone for these

Treats tinea topically

Tinea, as a wash, or as a powder mixed with vinegar into a thick paste

Treats trichomonas

Trichomonas vaginitis, as an external wash or douche

Semen Cassiae
cassia seed
Large Intestine · Kidney · Liver

Clears Liver Heat and Wind-Heat, and brightens the eyes

Painful, swollen red eyes when Liver Heat, or Wind-Heat lodged in the Liver channel, rises
Red itchy eyes, sensitivity to light and heavy tearing, including tears in the wind
Night blindness, and gradual loss of sight with no visible change in the eye

Calms the Liver and anchors Liver Yang

Headache and dizziness from Liver Fire or rising Liver Yang
Eye disturbance of a Liver Yang type
Hypertension

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

Long-standing constipation with dry or infrequent stools, above all when Liver Yin is deficient

Lowers blood pressure and serum cholesterol

High blood pressure
High cholesterol

Flos Farfarae
Coltsfoot Flower
Lung

Moistens the Lungs, descends Qi, stops cough and transforms Phlegm

Cough and wheezing from many causes, most often Cold Rebellious Lung Qi with cough and wheeze; being moistening, it can be used in Dryness where a purely warm, drying herb would not suit
Cough and wheezing from Heat or from Yin deficiency, in suitable combinations
Long-standing cough with streaks of blood in the sputum

Radix Sophorae Flavescentis
Sophora Root
Large Intestine · Stomach · Heart · Small Intestine · Bladder · Liver

Clears Heat and dries Damp

Lower Jiao Damp-Heat with jaundice, diarrhea or dysentery, vaginal discharge or sores
Acute dysentery with tenesmus
Viral hepatitis

Dispels Wind, kills parasites and stops itching

Chronic itching from Damp-toxin skin lesions or infestations, with scabies, weeping or bleeding, used internally and topically
Damp, itchy, weeping skin such as eczema or ringworm, very often as an external wash
Itching of the genitals with vaginal discharge, used internally or topically
Trichomonas vaginitis
Bronchial asthma

Clears Heat and promotes urination

Small Intestine Damp-Heat
Painful or difficult urination from Damp-Heat
Edema of a Heat type

kuan jin teng

Bencao Index

kun bu

Bencao Index

lai fu zi

Bencao Index

lei gong teng

Bencao Index

Thallus Eckloniae
Kelp
Stomach · Kidney · Liver

Resolves Phlegm and softens hardness

Phlegm nodules of the neck, such as scrofula and goiter, with fullness and a blocked feeling in the chest
Thyroid tumours, tuberculosis, orchitis, lymphadenitis and cirrhosis, combined with Blood-moving herbs
Difficulty swallowing
Palpable abdominal masses, an enlarged liver and spleen, and a painful swollen scrotum

Promotes urination, clears Heat and reduces swelling

Edema, fistula and Leg Qi, as a supporting herb
Difficult urination; the effect is mild, and it is rarely chosen for water problems alone

Caulis Tinosporae sinensis
Chinese tinospora stem
Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp and relaxes the sinews

Wind-Damp with Heat signs: pain, cramping and stiffness of the knees, legs, back and joints

Unblocks the channels

Traumatic injury that is red, swollen, hot and painful

Radix Tripterygii Wilfordii
Tripterygium Root
Spleen · Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp, strongly clears Heat, resolves toxicity, reduces swelling and relieves pain

Stubborn Bi with swollen joints that are hard to move

Dries Damp, kills parasites and stops itching

Persistent skin disorders, including tinea, particularly with severe itching
Applied topically against maggots and rats, and for snake venom

Semen Raphani
Radish Seed
Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Reduces Food stagnation, transforms accumulation and relieves distension

Food stagnating in the Middle Jiao: a full, distended feeling, belching that smells rotten, sour regurgitation, or diarrhea with tenesmus and abdominal pain
Especially suited to stagnation from starchy foods such as bread, noodles, dough and rice

Descends Qi and transforms Phlegm

Chronic cough or wheezing with copious phlegm and breathlessness, working best in Excess patterns
Phlegm-Damp building up alongside retained food

Lowers blood pressure

Hypertension

lei wan

Bencao Index

li lu

Bencao Index

li zhi he

Bencao Index

lian fang

Bencao Index

Radix et Rhizoma Veratri Nigri
veratrum root and rhizome

Induces vomiting to expel Phlegm-turbidity

Stubborn Phlegm conditions, such as Wind-stroke with abundant Phlegm and drooling

Expels Phlegm obstructing the orifices

Epilepsy and mania attributed to Phlegm blocking the orifices of the Heart

Kills parasites and stops itching (external use only)

Scabies
Tinea of the scalp or skin
Lice

Large Intestine · Stomach

Kills parasites

Tapeworm infestation, its signature use, where it often leads the formula
Roundworm, and also hookworm and pinworm
Childhood nutritional impairment or abdominal pain from worms, with poor appetite, a sallow face and wasting

Treats tinea topically

Fungal skin infection (tinea), applied externally

Receptaculum Nelumbinis
lotus peduncle
Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Stops bleeding and dispels Blood stasis

Heavy or irregular uterine bleeding, particularly with dark, clotted blood from stasis
Blood in the urine or stool
Bleeding hemorrhoids
Prolapse of the rectum or uterus
Abdominal pain from Blood stagnation
Retained placenta or drawn-out postpartum discharge, using the raw form

Dispels Summerheat and Damp

Summerheat diarrhea in children
Damp skin eruptions and eczema

Semen Litchi
Leechee Nut
Stomach · Liver

Disperses Cold and stagnation and relieves pain

Cold in the Liver channel with bulging disorder (Shan Qi) and pain in the groin or testicles, sometimes with swelling
Heat in the Liver channel, combined with suitable herbs
Running piglet Qi: a shooting sensation rising from the lower abdomen to the chest

Regulates Qi and relieves pain

Liver Qi stagnation with pain in the abdomen and epigastrium
Stagnant Qi and Blood with abdominal pain before periods or after childbirth

lian geng

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lian qiao

Bencao Index

lian xu

Bencao Index

lian zi

Bencao Index

Fructus Forsythiae
Forsythia Fruit
Lung · Heart · Gallbladder

Clears Heat, especially in the Upper Jiao, and resolves toxicity

Wind-Heat with high fever, mild chills and a sore throat
Onset of a Wind-Heat cold or Warm disease, with fever, headache and sore throat
Heat at deeper levels in advanced febrile illness: high fever, thirst, and delirium or mental disturbance

Reduces abscesses and dissipates nodules

Carbuncles, abscesses and toxic sores or swellings from Heat (Chuang Yung), for which it is a leading herb
Erysipelas and pustules beneath the skin
Lung abscess
Scrofula and other lumps of the neck from Heat toxin
Throat Bi

Clears Blood Heat

Blood Heat

Promotes urination

Lin syndrome, painful urination, blood in the urine and acute nephritis

Clears Summerheat and resolves Damp

Summer fever with thirst, irritability, scanty dark urine, reduced appetite and a heavy, clouded head

Unblocks Qi and opens the chest and diaphragm

Stuffiness, oppression or fullness of the chest and epigastrium accompanying Summerheat

Raises the Clear Yang and harmonises the Middle Jiao

Sluggish digestion and a foggy head left behind by Summerheat

Semen Nelumbinis
Lotus Seed
Spleen · Heart · Kidney

Strengthens the Spleen and stops diarrhea

Weak Spleen Qi with chronic diarrhea or loose stools and a poor appetite

Tonifies the Kidneys and secures Jing

Unstable, deficient Kidneys with premature ejaculation or spermatorrhea
Vaginal discharge, or excessive bleeding from the uterus

Nourishes the Heart and calms the Shen

Palpitations, anxiety, irritability and insomnia of a deficient type
Heart and Kidneys failing to communicate, with Yin of both depleted, so that Kidney water no longer checks Heart Fire

Stamen Nelumbinis
Lotus Semen
Heart · Kidney · Liver

Stabilises the Kidneys and secures Jing

Kidneys too deficient to hold: nocturnal emission, spermatorrhea, premature ejaculation, bedwetting, frequent urination or vaginal discharge

Clears Heart Heat

Heart Yin deficiency
Excessive dreaming and restless sleep that accompany seminal emission

Stops bleeding

Nosebleed, vomiting of blood and heavy uterine bleeding

lian zi xin

Bencao Index

liang mian zhen

Bencao Index

liang tou jian

Bencao Index

ling xiao hua

Bencao Index

Radix Zanthoxyli
shiny bramble

Dispels Wind, resolves Damp, reduces swelling and regulates menstruation
Swollen, sore throat
Malaria
Traumatic injury
Joint pain
Headache, toothache and abdominal pain

Nelumbinis Plumula
Lotus Plumule
Heart · Pericardium

Drains Heart Fire, calms the Shen and relieves irritability
Heat at the Ying level invading the Pericardium, with high fever, confusion or delirium and restlessness
Irritability or sleeplessness from Heart Fire
Thirst

Stops bleeding and secures Jing
Vomiting of blood, ulcers of the tongue or spermatorrhea, taken as a powder

Flos Campsis
Campsis Flower
Pericardium · Liver

Breaks up Blood stasis, unblocks the channels and vessels, and disperses abdominal masses
Blood stasis after childbirth with lumps in the breast
Abdominal masses from long-standing Blood stasis
Amenorrhea, or periods that are irregular or painful with dark clots
Traumatic injury

Cools the Blood and dispels Wind
Blood Heat showing as itching and similar signs
Rashes and hot, recurring skin eruptions, including rosacea-type and acne-type presentations, where Blood Heat stirs internal Wind

Rhizoma Anemones Raddeanae
radde anemone

Dispels Wind-Damp
Joint pain from Wind, Cold and Damp
Limb spasms

Reduces swelling, disperses abdominal lumps and resolves Phlegm
Swollen abscesses
Stomach cancer
Ulcers

ling yang jiao

Bencao Index

ling zhi

Bencao Index

liu ji nu

Bencao Index

liu yue xue

Bencao Index

Ganoderma
Ganoderma
Lung · Heart · Liver

Tonifies Heart Qi, nourishes Heart Blood and calms the Shen

Heart Qi and Blood too weak to nourish the Shen: insomnia, fright, palpitations and forgetfulness; can be given alone
Sleeplessness, tiredness, forgetfulness and low appetite when Heart Blood and Spleen Qi are weak

Tonifies Lung Qi, transforms Phlegm and stops cough and wheezing

Cough and wheezing with Deficiency Cold or Phlegm-Damp; can be given alone
Wheezing when the Lungs and Kidneys are both deficient
Cold-type cough bringing up plenty of sputum
Long-standing asthma and difficult breathing

Tonifies Qi and nourishes Blood

Consumptive deficiency with shortness of breath and poor appetite, and either cold hands and feet or irritability with a dry mouth
Weak Qi and Blood showing as dizziness, tiredness, low back pain, sluggish digestion and loose stools

Cornu Saigae Tataricae
Antelope Horn
Heart · Liver

Drains Liver Heat, extinguishes Wind and stops spasms and convulsions

Seizures and convulsions in children, especially with high fever
High fever turning into limb spasm, a stiff neck, opisthotonos and loss of consciousness
Stubborn high fever from Heat at the Ying and Blood (Xue) levels
Extreme Heat stirring up Wind
Liver Wind

Calms the Liver and anchors Yang

Rising Liver Yang with dizziness, vertigo, tinnitus, irritability, restlessness and a splitting headache; a key substance for this

Clears the Liver and brightens the eyes

Liver Fire blazing upward with headache, and red, swollen, painful eyes or sensitivity to light

Drains Heat, cools the Blood and resolves Fire toxicity

Heat invading the Pericardium: high fever, delirium, manic behaviour and, at worst, loss of consciousness
Warm disease reaching the Blood level, with high fever, clouded consciousness and dark red rashes

Clears Damp-Heat

Wind-Damp-Heat Bi

Herba Serissae
Spleen · Liver

Expels Wind, opens the channels, promotes urination, clears Heat, reduces swelling and resolves toxicity

Edema
Dysentery
Scrofula
Vaginal discharge
Toothache and sore throat
Swollen, painful eyes
Carbuncles
Rheumatic pain of the lower back and legs

Herba Artemisiae Anomala
Anomalous Artemesia
Spleen · Heart

Breaks up Blood stasis, promotes menstruation and relieves pain

Amenorrhea from Blood stasis
Abdominal pain after childbirth, or other abdominal pain, from severe stasis
Traumatic injury such as sprains, bruising, fractures or falls, with severe pain and stasis

Reduces Food stagnation, transforms accumulation and awakens the Spleen

Food retention causing indigestion and a painful abdomen

Applied topically as a powder

Burns, bruises and bleeding wounds

long chi

Bencao Index

long dan cao

Bencao Index

long gu

Bencao Index

long kui

Bencao Index

Radix Gentianae
Gentian Root
Stomach · Gallbladder · Liver

Drains Damp-Heat from the Liver and Gallbladder channels

Damp-Heat rising along the Gallbladder channel: red, swollen eyes, a red sore throat, swollen painful ears, or sudden ear pain or deafness
Liver and Gallbladder Damp-Heat with jaundice
Damp-Heat in the genital area with itching, swelling, pain or dampness, and a foul-smelling, coloured vaginal discharge
Painful, burning urination

Drains Excess Liver Fire

Liver Fire flaring upward with headache, dizziness, red eyes, a bitter taste, rib-side pain, irritability and a short temper
Fever with convulsions, spasms or flank pain from Wind-Heat in the Liver

Extinguishes Liver Wind in children

Convulsions with high fever in infants, when Liver Fire stirs up Wind, at reduced doses

Dens Draconis
Dragon Teeth
Lung · Heart

Settles fright and calms the Shen

Restlessness, anxious palpitations, insomnia and sleep disturbed by dreams
Fright disorders in children
Marked Heart and Liver disturbance with agitation verging on mania

Clears Heat and relieves irritability

Disturbed Shen with an accompanying Heat or agitation component

Calms the Liver and stops spasm

Irritability with spasms from stirring Liver Wind
Convulsions, including in children

Herba Solani Nigri
black nightshade
Lung · Stomach · Bladder

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, invigorates Blood and reduces swelling

Sores and abscesses
Itchy sores and rashes
Erysipelas, and a swollen, painful throat
Cancer
Erysipelas and boils, treated topically

Promotes urination and relieves painful urinary dysfunction

Hot, painful urinary dysfunction
Edema with difficult urination

Os Draconis
dinosaur bone
Heart · Kidney · Liver

Settles and calms the Shen

An agitated Heart and Shen with emotional distress, restlessness, insomnia, and palpitations with anxiety
Seizures, or mania and withdrawal, from severe agitation

Calms the Liver and anchors floating Yang

Liver Yang rising on deficient Liver Yin: irritability, restlessness, dizziness, vertigo, blurred vision and bad temper
Yang stirred up by Blood deficiency or Heat

Prevents leakage of fluids

Loss of fluids from deficiency: spermatorrhea, nocturnal emission, night sweats, spontaneous sweating, vaginal discharge or uterine bleeding

Applied topically, generates flesh and astringes sores

Chronic sores and ulcers that will not heal
Eczema and weeping skin lesions, calcined and powdered

long yan rou

Bencao Index

lou lu

Bencao Index

lu feng fang

Bencao Index

lu gan shi

Bencao Index

Radix Rhapontici
rhaponticum root
Large Intestine · Stomach

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, drains abscesses, reduces swelling and expels pus

- Sores and abscesses in their early, red, swollen and painful stage
- Swelling and pain of the breast, including mastitis with abscess from Heat

Promotes lactation

- Scanty milk with distended breasts, especially when Heat is the cause

Arillus Longan
Flesh Of The Longan Fruit
Spleen · Heart

Tonifies the Heart and Spleen, nourishes Blood and calms the Shen

- Heart and Spleen deficiency showing as dizziness, forgetfulness, poor sleep and palpitations
- Overthinking or overwork that has used up the Blood, with restlessness; can be taken alone as a tea

Calamina
calamine
Stomach · Liver

Brightens the eyes and removes superficial visual obstruction

- Superficial obstruction of vision, such as a corneal film or nebula, with red, swollen eyes and pterygium
- Red eyes from rising Liver Fire
- Excessive tearing and sensitivity to light, applied as an ultra-fine powder in eye washes, drops or ointments

Dries Damp, generates flesh and stops itching

- Open sores draining pus over a long period
- Wounds that heal poorly; can be used alone
- Weeping, itchy Damp skin lesions such as eczema, as a dusting powder or paste
- Hemorrhoids and burns, as one ingredient among others in classical topical formulas

Nidus Vespae
Wasp Nest
Lung · Stomach

Resolves toxicity, expels Wind and relieves pain and itching

- Applied as a wash or ointment for itchy rashes, scabies, tinea, carbuncles and sores
- Severe toothache that feels like a worm boring into the tooth, used as a gargle
- Wind-type toothache made worse by cold or draughts
- Boils, abscesses and breast abscess (mastitis); also scrofula and other nodules

Expels Wind, dries Damp and relieves pain and itching

- Wind-Damp Bi and rheumatic joint pain
- Wind rash and hives
- Internal Wind

Treats tumours

- Cancers

Kills parasites

- Used as an insecticide
- Eczema and other persistent itching lesions of the skin, with a powder or wash applied externally, or small amounts of the processed nest taken internally

lu gen

Bencao Index

lu hui

Bencao Index

lu jiao

Bencao Index

lu jiao jiao

Bencao Index

Aloe
aloe
Large Intestine · Stomach · Liver

Purges downward, drains Fire and clears accumulation

Constipation from accumulated Heat, with dizziness, red eyes and irritability
Hot-type constipation where Heart and Liver Fire bring restlessness, irritability and poor sleep
Headache with constipation from Liver and Large Intestine Heat
Long-standing constipation

Clears Heat and cools the Liver

Liver Fire or Heat in the Liver channel: headache, dizziness, ringing in the ears, irritability, fever, constipation and discomfort in the epigastrium

Kills parasites and strengthens the Stomach

Nutritional impairment in children, particularly from roundworm
Tinea (ringworm)

External application

Burns, applied topically

Rhizoma Phragmitis
Reed Rhizome
Lung · Stomach

Clears Heat from the Lungs and Stomach, relieves irritability and generates Fluids

Internal Heat with high fever, irritability, thirst and a dry mouth and throat
Warm febrile disease with fever and thirst, protecting Fluids that Heat has begun to injure
Acute Lung Heat in particular
Lung abscess or carbuncle (Fei Yong): cough and chest pain, bringing up pus or sputum streaked with blood

Clears Stomach Heat, directs Stomach Qi down, relieves thirst and stops vomiting

Nausea and vomiting as Stomach Heat sends Qi upward

Clears Heat and promotes urination

Scanty dark urine or blood in the urine, especially with irritability and thirst

Vents rashes

Rashes from Wind-Heat, or in early Warm disease, that have not fully come out

Relieves food poisoning

Poisoning from eating fish or crab
Alcohol poisoning

Colla Cervi Cornus
Deer Antler Glue
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies Kidney Yang

Kidney Yang deficiency with a cold, weak lower back and knees

Augments Jing and Blood

Depleted Jing and Blood with dizziness, ringing in the ears and profound tiredness

Stops bleeding from Deficiency Cold

Chronic or heavy uterine bleeding from Kidney Yang and Chong-Ren deficiency with Cold
Abnormal vaginal discharge arising from the same deficient, Cold pattern

Cornu Cervi
Deer Antler
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies Kidney Yang

Mild Kidney Yang deficiency with a cold, weak lower back and knees

Augments Jing and Blood

Depleted Jing and Blood with tiredness and a weak lower back

Invigorates Blood and dispels stasis

Pain from Blood stasis
Deep, long-standing lower back pain
Swelling after traumatic injury

Reduces swelling and disperses Cold toxin

Yin-type sores and carbuncles
Early-stage or Cold-type breast abscess (mastitis with no Heat signs)

lu jiao shuang

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lu lu tong

Bencao Index

lu rong

Bencao Index

lu xian cao

Bencao Index

Fructus Liquidambaris

Liquidambar Fruit

Stomach · Liver

Moves Qi and invigorates Blood, opens the Middle Jiao and unblocks the channels

Epigastric pain with abdominal distension

Irregular or scanty periods from stagnation

Wind-Damp Bi with stiff, painful low back and knees

Pain in the limbs

Expels Wind and promotes urination

Nasal congestion

Bi syndrome

Edema with difficult urination

Promotes lactation and unblocks the breast

Scanty breast milk after childbirth from Qi stagnation

Distended breasts

Treats allergic conditions

Allergies of the skin and nose, including urticaria, allergic rhinitis and generalised itching

Cornu Cervi Degelatinatum

Antler Powder

Kidney · Liver

Gently tonifies Kidney Yang

Kidney Yang deficiency with a sore, weak lower back and knees and mild impotence

Warms Kidney and Spleen Yang

Kidney and Spleen Yang deficiency with Cold in the

Stomach: vomiting, poor appetite and loose stools

Astringes to stop bleeding

Uterine bleeding (metrorrhagia) from Deficiency Cold

Other long-standing bleeding of a deficient type

Secures Jing and stops discharge

Spermatorrhea, frequent urination or bedwetting from Kidney Yang deficiency

Deficient, Cold-type vaginal discharge

Draws out toxin and heals sores (external use)

Chronic sores and wounds that are slow to close, dusted on as a powder

Herba Pyrolae

pyrola

Kidney · Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp and strengthens the sinews and bones

Wind-Damp Bi with weakness of the back and legs; may be used on its own

Stops bleeding

Bleeding of many kinds: coughing up blood, nosebleed, irregular uterine bleeding and bleeding from injury

Tonifies the Lungs and Kidneys and helps the Kidneys grasp Qi

Cough and wheezing from long-standing Lung Qi deficiency, or when the Kidneys fail to grasp Qi

Invigorates Blood and regulates menstruation

Vaginal discharge (leukorrhea)

Nourishes the Heart and stops sweating

Heart Yin deficiency with palpitations and night sweats

Cornu Cervi Pantotrichum

Deer Velvet

Kidney · Liver

Tonifies Kidney Yang

Kidney Yang deficiency: fatigue, impotence, cold limbs, light-headedness, ringing in the ears, frequent copious clear urine, and a sore, weak lower back and knees

Deep Cold and exhaustion with aversion to cold

Warms Yang, regulates the Chong and Ren and secures the Dai vessel

Uterine bleeding or thin, clear vaginal discharge from

Deficiency Cold, with weakness of the Chong, Ren and Dai vessels

Infertility from a cold uterus; may be used on its own

Tonifies the Du vessel, replenishes Jing and Blood, and strengthens sinews, bones and marrow

Depleted Jing and Blood with dizziness, ringing in the ears and profound fatigue

Developmental problems in children from Jing and Blood deficiency: failure to thrive, poor growth, late walking, late teething or late closure of the fontanel, intellectual and learning difficulties, and skeletal deformity such as rickets

Weak, brittle bones from a constitutional deficiency

Fractures that fail to knit, with Kidney deficiency and exhausted Jing; may be used on its own

Tonifies Qi and Blood and heals chronic Yin-type sores

Qi and Blood deficiency

Chronic Yin-type boils and ulcers that will not heal, especially in very deficient, cold patients; may be used on its own

luo bu ma ye, luo bu ma

Bencao Index

luo han guo

Bencao Index

luo shi teng

Bencao Index

ma bian cao

Bencao Index

Fructus Momordicae
grosvenor's momordica fruit
Lung · Large Intestine

Moistens and cools the Lungs, transforms Phlegm and stops cough

- Cough from Lung Heat or Dryness
- Chronic cough during the day, productive or dry
- Lung Yin deficiency
- Chronic dry, hot cough with a dry throat, sometimes with scant yellow sputum that is hard to bring up or streaked with blood
- Loss of voice with a sore throat

Generates Fluids and relieves thirst

- Thirst when Summerheat has damaged the Fluids
- Thirst from depleted Fluids

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

- Dry-type constipation with hard stools from lack of moisture, especially when Lung Qi fails to disperse

Dissipates nodules

- Phlegm nodules of the neck
- Scrofula

Folium Apocyni Veneti
dogbane leaf
Liver

Calms Liver Yang, clears Liver Fire and extinguishes Wind

- Dizziness, vertigo, headache, irritability, restlessness and poor sleep from Liver Fire or ascending Liver Yang
- Hypertension

Clears Heat and promotes urination

- Edema and difficult urination with Heat

Nourishes the Heart and calms the Shen

- Insomnia, palpitations and general nervous complaints
- Post-concussion syndrome

Supports health in middle age and later life

Herba Verbenae
European verbena
Spleen · Liver

Invigorates and cools Blood, breaks up abdominal masses and unblocks menstruation

- Painful or absent periods from Blood stasis
- Abdominal masses; may be decocted on its own and followed with warm wine

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity

- Severe sore throat and throat Bi
- Accumulated Heat toxin such as breast abscess, for which the fresh herb is crushed
- Swollen, painful gums

Promotes urination, reduces edema and checks malarial disorders

- Edema or ascites when Damp is blocked internally
- Edema, ascites and fluid build-up in the later stages of parasitic infection
- Malarial disorders, using the fresh juice

Caulis Trachelospermi
Chinese star jasmine stem
Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp and unblocks the channels and collaterals

- Wind-Damp Bi with spasm of the sinews, best suited to Hot Bi
- Stiff, painful joints with cramping sinews, particularly when Heat is present rather than Cold

Cools Blood and reduces swelling

- Abscesses and toxic sores that are red, hot and painful
- Throat Bi with a swollen, painful throat

Relaxes the sinews

- Tight sinews and restricted movement from Wind-Damp obstruction with Heat

ma bo

Bencao Index

ma chi xian

Bencao Index

ma dou ling

Bencao Index

ma huang

Bencao Index

Herba Portulacae
Purslane
Large Intestine · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxin and cools Blood

- Dysentery from Fire toxin or Damp-Heat
- Main use: bacillary dysentery where the bowels do not empty fully
- Blood Heat

Clears Damp-Heat and heals sores

- Carbuncles and sores from Fire toxin (Chuang Yung), taken internally or applied
- Damp-Heat skin lesions, eczema-like eruptions and boils, internally or topically
- Vaginal discharge, red or white

Relieves the pain and swelling of snakebite and wasp stings

- Snakebite and wasp stings, as a traditional external application; a venomous bite is a medical emergency

Stops bleeding, disperses Blood stasis and relieves painful urinary dysfunction

- Painful urinary dysfunction with blood (Blood Lin)
- Hot, painful urinary dysfunction
- Urinary tract infection with blood in the urine
- Uterine bleeding, particularly after childbirth

Lasiosphaera
Puffball Fruiting Body
Lung

Clears Lung Heat, resolves Fire toxin and benefits the throat

- Fire toxin with a swollen, sore throat, hoarseness or loss of voice
- Cough or asthma from Lung Heat

Stops bleeding

- Bleeding in the mouth, particularly the gums and lips, applied topically or taken internally
- Nosebleed, or vomiting blood
- Bleeding gums from frostbite

Herba Ephedrae
ephedra
Lung · Bladder

Induces sweating and releases the Exterior

- Wind-Cold invading the Lungs: chills and fever with no sweating, headache, and a pulse that is floating and tight
- Exterior Excess at the Tai Yang stage

Diffuses Lung Qi, calms wheezing and stops cough

- Wheezing and cough when Wind-Cold blocks the Lung Qi
- Wheezing of internal origin, combined with other herbs to suit a Hot or Cold pattern

Promotes urination and reduces edema

- Wind edema: swelling that comes on with an external pathogen disrupting the Lungs' regulation of water

Warms and disperses Cold

- Wind-Cold Bi
- Toxic sores that have not come to a head

Fructus Aristolochiae
birthwort fruit, aristolochia fruit
Lung · Large Intestine

Clears the Lungs, transforms Phlegm, stops cough and calms wheezing

- Cough or wheezing from Lung Heat with Qi rebelling upward
- Cough and wheezing from Phlegm-Heat lodged in the Lungs
- Deficiency Heat of the Lungs
- Chronic asthma from Lung deficiency

Clears and drains Large Intestine Heat, reduces swelling and relieves pain

- Swelling and pain around the anus from Large Intestine Heat
- Bleeding hemorrhoids and anal fistula

Lowers blood pressure

- Hypertension with Liver Yang rising

ma huang gen

Bencao Index

ma qian zi

Bencao Index

mai men dong

Bencao Index

mai ya

Bencao Index

Semen Strychni
nux vomica seed
Spleen · Liver

Unblocks the channels and collaterals, disperses clumps, cools Blood Heat, reduces swelling and relieves pain

Sores, abscesses and ulcers of Yin type
Deep-rooted toxic sores, carbuncles and ulcers that will not heal, applied topically
Swelling and pain from injury, including bruising and the pain of fractures
Stubborn Wind-Damp Bi with pain, pins and needles, numbness and spasm, where milder Wind-Damp herbs have failed
Wind-Cold-Damp Bi
Facial paralysis
Numbness and weakness of the limbs
Tumors
Phlegm-Damp obstructing the Heart
Liver and Kidney deficiency
Qi stagnation of the Liver and Gallbladder
Stomach Qi stagnation

Radix Ephedrae
Ephedra Root
Lung

Stops sweating from deficiency

Spontaneous sweating from Qi deficiency
Night sweats from Yin deficiency
Sweating after childbirth

Fructus Hordei Germinatus
Barley Sprouts
Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Reduces Food stagnation, aids digestion and strengthens the Stomach

Food stagnation from grains, starches or any kind of fruit, including rice, noodles, wheat, yams and potatoes
Infants who cannot digest milk well
Food stagnation with weak digestion and poor appetite from Spleen Qi deficiency

Inhibits or promotes lactation, depending on dose

Weaning, to stop milk production
Painful, distended breasts

Smooths the flow of Liver Qi

Supporting herb for Liver Qi stagnation or Liver Qi invading the Spleen, with oppression or distension of the epigastrium or flanks, belching and poor appetite

Radix Ophiopogonis
dwarf lilyturf tuber
Lung · Stomach · Heart

Nourishes Yin, moistens the Lungs and stops cough

Lung Yin deficiency with a dry hacking cough, or thick sputum that is hard to cough up, or coughing of blood
Wheezing and a sense of fullness in the chest
Warm-Dryness pathogen
Dryness transformed into Fire

Nourishes Stomach Yin and generates Fluids

Dry mouth and tongue from Stomach Yin deficiency
Xiao Ke (wasting and thirst) and other thirst when Stomach Yin is depleted
Depleted Fluids after febrile disease

Moistens the Intestines

Constipation with a dry mouth and irritability after febrile disease or from Yin deficiency drying the Intestines

Clears the Heart and relieves irritability

Heat in the Ying level, with fever and irritability that grow worse at night
Yin deficiency with fever, restlessness and poor sleep that grow worse at night

man jing zi

Bencao Index

mang xiao

Bencao Index

mao dong qing

Bencao Index

mao zhua cao

Bencao Index

Natrii Sulfas
Mirabilite
Large Intestine · Stomach

Purges accumulation, guides out stagnation, softens hardness and moistens Dryness

Constipation with hardened stool from accumulated Heat in the Stomach and Intestines
Interior Excess Heat with constipation, a full and painful abdomen, and dry hard stools

Clears Heat and drains Fire

Heat in the Stomach or Lungs, particularly with Phlegm build-up or clumping in the Intestines

Clears Heat and reduces swelling

Red, painful, swollen eyes
Sores or swelling of the mouth and throat, applied topically
Red, swollen skin lesions, applied topically
Mastitis, applied topically

Softens hard masses

Hard abdominal masses and lumps from Heat and stagnation

Fructus Viticis
Vitex Fruit
Stomach · Bladder · Liver

Disperses Wind and clears Heat

Wind-Heat colds where headache or eye pain is the main complaint

Clears Wind-Heat from the Liver channel and benefits the head and eyes

Wind-Heat in the Liver channel with red, sore or swollen eyes, excessive tearing, or spots before the eyes
Liver Yang rising
Cataract and night blindness (traditional use)

Drains Damp, expels Wind and relieves pain

Supporting herb for Wind-Damp in the limbs: heaviness, numbness, stiffness or cramps

Radix Ranunculi Ternati
catclaw buttercup root
Lung · Liver

Reduces swelling

Scrofula
Subcutaneous nodules
Pulmonary tuberculosis

Treats malaria

Malaria

Radix Ilex Pubescens
hairy holly root
Spleen · Heart

Invigorates Blood and unblocks the channels and collaterals

Chest pain from Heart Blood stasis
Hemiplegia after stroke
Qi stagnation of the Heart
Chest Bi

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity and stops cough

Cough from Lung Heat
Cough from Wind-Heat
Sore, swollen throat
Burns, applied as a powder

mei gui hua

Bencao Index

meng chong

Bencao Index

mi meng hua

Bencao Index

mi tuo seng

Bencao Index

Tabanus
gradfly
Liver

Breaks up Blood stasis, reduces abdominal masses and unblocks the vessels

- Blood stasis causing amenorrhea, retained lochia or abdominal masses
- Stubborn, fixed, long-standing stasis, as one of the strongest (attacking) Blood movers
- Irregular periods from obstruction (not from deficiency)
- Palpable fixed masses from congealed Blood

Dispels stasis, heals injury and relieves pain

- Traumatic injury
- Bruising, swelling and pain after an injury, with old Blood obstructing the channels

Flos Rosae Rugosae
rose flower
Spleen · Liver

Moves Qi and relieves stagnation

- Liver and Stomach disharmony: oppression in the chest, distending pain of the flanks and epigastrium, belching and poor appetite
- Constrained Liver Qi invading the Spleen and Stomach
- Qi stagnation where a drier Qi-moving herb could damage Yin, as this one is fragrant, mild and comparatively moist

Moves Qi, harmonises Blood, disperses stasis and regulates menstruation

- Irregular periods, menstrual pain and premenstrual breast tenderness from Blood stasis
- Blood stasis from injury

Soothes the Liver, relieves pain and checks diarrhea

- Chronic gastritis, including gastritis of nervous origin
- Hepatitis

Lithargyrum
galena
Spleen · Liver

Absorbs fluid, reduces swelling and stops bleeding

- Hemorrhoidal swelling
- Weeping ulcers and sores
- Damp skin eruptions
- Weeping eczema and sores that will not close, applied to dry the discharge
- Leukoderma
- Underarm odor

Resolves toxicity and kills parasites, applied externally

- Tinea
- Scabies, ringworm and tinea versicolor

Heals sores

- Burns, scalds and stubborn skin ulceration, compounded into powders or pastes for outside use

Sends Phlegm downward and settles childhood convulsions

- Chronic dysenteric disorders
- Convulsions in children

Calms fright

- Fright

Flos Buddlejae
Buddleia Flower Bud
Liver

Clears the Liver, brightens the eyes and removes superficial visual obstruction

- Eyes that are red, swollen and painful, with excess tearing, sensitivity to light and glare
- Superficial visual obstruction, cataract and pterygium
- Blurred or dim vision
- Suits Excess and Deficiency eye disorders alike, including those rooted in deficient Liver Blood or Yin
- Dry, tired eyes with dim sight, as well as hot, red eyes

mian hua gen

Bencao Index

ming fan

Bencao Index

mo han lian

Bencao Index

mo yao

Bencao Index

Alumen
Alum
Lung · Large Intestine · Spleen · Liver

Resolves toxicity, dries Damp, kills parasites and stops itching

- Damp-Heat rashes such as scabies and tinea, as an external wash
- Eczema and other damp rashes, ringworm, sores and carbuncles, and mouth ulcers, as a wash or powder
- Painful swelling of the throat or eyes
- Damp-Heat jaundice

Restrains sores, generates flesh and transforms putrefaction

- Topical use for blockage and stagnation where toxins and pathogens have lodged in the muscles, channels and collaterals
- Toxic sores (Chuang Yung), applied topically

Stops bleeding and checks diarrhea

- Chronic diarrhea or dysentery, including with blood
- Blood in the stool, uterine bleeding and vaginal discharge
- Vomiting of blood
- Nosebleed, bleeding gums, hemorrhoidal bleeding and wounds from injury, applied topically

Clears Heat and expels Phlegm

- Wind-Phlegm with Heat, causing irritability, delirium and convulsions
- Wind-Phlegm with seizures or epilepsy, copious Phlegm and excess salivation
- Cough with sputum that is hard to bring up

Radix Gossypii
levant cotton root-bark

Supplements deficiency, calms wheezing and regulates menstruation

- Cough and asthma from general weakness
- Hernia
- Uterine bleeding
- Uterine prolapse

Myrrha
Myrrh
Spleen · Heart · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis, relieves pain and reduces swelling

- Pain from Blood stasis: injuries and bruising, sores, carbuncles and swellings, fixed abdominal masses, Bi pain, and chest or abdominal pain
- Absent or painful periods
- Pain and spotting after childbirth
- Intestinal abscess

Generates flesh and promotes healing

- Chronic sores, ulcers and skin lesions that fail to heal, long applied externally to wounds

Herba Ecliptae
Eclipta
Kidney · Liver

Nourishes Liver and Kidney Yin

- Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency: dizziness, vertigo, blurred vision and early greying of the hair

Cools Blood and stops bleeding

- Bleeding from Blood Heat on a base of Yin deficiency with Empty Fire: vomiting or coughing blood, nosebleed, blood in the stool, uterine bleeding and above all blood in the urine

mu bie zi

Bencao Index

mu dan pi

Bencao Index

mu gua

Bencao Index

mu hu die

Bencao Index

Cortex Moutan
Moutan Root Bar
Heart · Kidney · Liver

Clears Heat and cools Blood
Heat at the Blood level with nosebleed, coughing or vomiting of blood, or bleeding under the skin (purpura)
Heavy periods from Blood Heat

Clears Deficiency Fire
After a warm febrile disease, lingering Yin-deficiency Heat that brings night fevers and cools by morning
Steaming bone disorder with no sweating; the absence of sweating sets it apart from herbs for Yin-deficiency sweating

Invigorates Blood and dispels stasis
Blood stasis with absent or painful periods or menstrual cramps
Abdominal masses
Bruises, lumps and swelling from injury
Liver Blood stagnation

Clears Liver Fire
Liver Fire causing pain of the head, eyes or flanks, a flushed face and painful periods

Drains pus and reduces swelling
Sores that will not drain, applied topically
Intestinal abscess, taken internally

Semen Oroxyli
Indian trumpet flower seed
Lung · Liver

Moistens the Lungs, stops cough and clears the voice
Hoarse or lost voice, with a dry, sore throat and cough

Soothes the Liver and regulates Qi
Qi stagnation causing pain in the flanks and epigastrium

Heals ulcerated, suppurating sores
Suppurating sores from Damp-Heat in the skin, applied topically or taken internally

Semen Momordicae
cochinchina momordica seed
Large Intestine · Stomach · Liver

Resolves toxicity, reduces swelling and dissipates nodules
Toxic swellings, hard lumps, scrofula and sores that will not heal, applied topically
Boils, carbuncles, and breast abscess or mastitis, as a topical paste
Hemorrhoids and fistula, as a wash or application

Reduces swelling and invigorates Blood
Swelling and pain from falls, fractures, bruises and sprains, applied topically
Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao causing low back pain, applied topically

Treats tinea externally
Ringworm and favus of the skin or scalp, ground and applied

Fructus Chaenomelis
Chaenomeles Fruit
Spleen · Liver

Relaxes the sinews and unblocks the channels and collaterals
Damp Bi of the limbs, particularly with severe cramping pain and weak low back and legs
Muscle cramps and spasm, classically painful calf cramps (zhuan jin)
Pain and stiffness of the sinews and joints of the lower limbs

Harmonises the Stomach, nourishes the Liver and transforms Damp
Leg Qi (Jiao Qi): Damp obstruction leaving the legs swollen, heavy, weak and prone to cramp
Abdominal pain and spasm with calf cramps and edema
Leg problems arising from disharmony of the Liver and Spleen
Vomiting and diarrhea together when Damp-turbidity disrupts the Spleen and Stomach, as in sudden turmoil disorder (huo luan)

Reduces Food stagnation
Food stagnation

mu li

Bencao Index

mu mian hua

Bencao Index

mu tong

Bencao Index

mu xiang

Bencao Index

Large Intestine

Clears Heat, promotes urination, resolves toxicity and stops bleeding

- Diarrhea
- Dysentery with blood (red dysentery)
- Suppuration
- Uterine bleeding (metrorrhagia)
- Bleeding hemorrhoids
- Cuts and incised wounds

Concha Ostreae

Oyster Shell
Kidney · Liver

Settles and calms the Shen with its weight

Palpitations with anxiety, restlessness and poor sleep from an agitated Heart and Shen

Calms the Liver, benefits Yin and anchors floating Yang

Restlessness, irritability, palpitations and spontaneous sweating from Liver Yin deficiency with rising Liver Yang, or Yin deficiency with internal Heat
Yin deficiency with Yang rising: dizziness, headache, a red flushed face, irritability, blurred vision and ringing in the ears

Prevents leakage of fluids

Unremitting sweating after a febrile illness or with steaming bone disorder
Leakage from deficiency: spermatorrhea or nocturnal emissions, vaginal discharge, uterine bleeding, and night or spontaneous sweating

Softens hardness and dissipates nodules

Lumps of many kinds, above all in the neck, such as goiter, scrofula and swollen lymph nodes

Absorbs acid and relieves pain (calcined)

Acid stomach pain with sourness in the mouth

Radix Aucklandiae

Aucklandia
Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen · San Jiao · Gallbladder

Moves Qi and relieves pain

Spleen and Stomach Qi stagnation: poor appetite, food that seems to sit in the stomach, epigastric or abdominal pain and bloating, nausea and vomiting
Flank pain, distension or soreness from stagnant Qi of the Liver or Gallbladder

Regulates stagnant Qi in the Intestines

Diarrhea or dysentery with abdominal pain and tenesmus from Qi stagnation in the Intestines
Dysentery or diarrhea with tenesmus of Excess or Deficiency type, combined with Heat-clearing herbs for Damp-Heat or with warm astringents for chronic Deficiency Cold

Strengthens the Spleen and prevents stagnation

Qi stagnation caused by rich, cloying tonics, especially when the Spleen is too weak to transport and transform
Spleen Qi deficiency with a full, bloated, painful abdomen, poor appetite, vomiting and diarrhea
Food stagnation

Clears Damp-Heat and harmonises the Liver and Spleen

Liver and Spleen disharmony with rib-side pain and distension, a bitter taste, yellow tongue coating and possibly jaundice

Caulis Akebiae

Akebia Caulis
Heart · Small Intestine · Bladder

Promotes urination and relieves painful urinary dysfunction

Damp-Heat Lin with painful, rough, dribbling urination
Edema and ascites

Drains Heart Heat downward through the Small Intestine

Excess Heat in the Small Intestine with irritability, sores of the mouth or tongue and scanty urine

Promotes lactation and unblocks the Blood vessels

Insufficient breast milk
Amenorrhea
Hot Bi with painful, stiff joints

mu zei

Bencao Index

nan gua zi

Bencao Index

niu bang zi

Bencao Index

niu huang

Bencao Index

Semen Cucurbitae
pumpkin seed and husk
Large Intestine · Stomach

Expels parasites and relieves pain

Tapeworm, roundworm, threadworm and blood flukes (schistosomiasis); may be used alone
Tapeworm, together with Bing Lang: this seed paralyses the middle and rear segments while Bing Lang acts on the head, so the whole worm can pass intact
Parasites in children, the elderly and weak patients who cannot tolerate harsher anthelmintics
Acute schistosomiasis (a historical use, not current standard therapy)

Supports fluid metabolism after childbirth

Insufficient breast milk
Swollen hands and feet after giving birth

Herba Equiseti Hiemalis
common scouring rush
Lung · Gallbladder · Liver

Disperses Wind-Heat, clears the eyes and removes superficial visual obstruction

Wind-Heat in the eyes: redness, pain and swelling, clouding, blurred vision, pterygium, excess tearing and headache
Cataract and conjunctivitis
Fire in the Liver and Gallbladder channels
Hazy vision from Liver Yin deficiency

Clears Heat and stops bleeding

Blood in the stool or bleeding hemorrhoids from Heat in the Blood or the Lower Jiao

Heart · Liver

Clears the Heart, opens the orifices with aroma, revives the Shen and transforms Phlegm

Delirium or coma when Hot Phlegm blocks the Pericardium or a Warm-Heat pathogen invades
Hot-closed disorder: in warm febrile disease, high fever with delirium or unconsciousness
Phlegm-Heat clouding the sensory orifices
Seizures, convulsions or Wind-stroke

Clears the Liver, resolves Fire toxin, extinguishes Wind and stops tremor

Liver Wind stirred by extreme Heat, with high fever, spasm, tremor or convulsions
Convulsions in children

Drains Heat and resolves Fire toxin

Carbuncles, boils and many kinds of hot swellings (Chuang Yung); may be used alone
Sore, painful throat, and ulcers of the mouth and tongue

Fructus Arctii
Arcticum
Lung · Stomach

Disperses Wind-Heat and benefits the throat

Fever, cough and a sore throat from Wind-Heat
Red, swollen, painful throat and acute tonsillitis

Resolves toxicity and vents rashes

Carbuncles and red swellings
Measles in its early stage, and mumps
Erythema and acute feverish maculopapular rashes
Rashes, such as measles, that have not fully come out
Itchy rashes from Wind-Heat

Moistens the Intestines

Constipation where Wind-Heat toxin is joined by internal Heat
Constipation accompanying other toxic conditions such as acne

nu zhen zi

Bencao Index

nuo dao gen

Bencao Index

ou jie

Bencao Index

pang da hai

Bencao Index

Radix Oryzae Glutinosae
Glutinous Rice Root
Lung · Kidney · Liver

Stops sweating from deficiency
Spontaneous sweating from Qi deficiency
Night sweats from Yin deficiency

Reduces low-grade fever
Fever from Yin deficiency

Fructus Ligustri Lucidi
glossy privet fruit
Kidney · Liver

Nourishes Liver and Kidney Yin and Jing
Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency: dizziness, floaters before the eyes, premature grey hair, ringing in the ears, and an aching, weak low back and knees

Clears Deficiency Heat
Empty Fire rising from Yin deficiency

Brightens the eyes
Weak eyesight from Liver and Kidney deficiency
Blurred vision, dry eyes and failing sight, whether from Excess or Deficiency
Painful red eyes with Liver Yang rising

Semen Sterculiae Lychnophorae
boat-fruited stercurlia seed
Lung · Large Intestine

Clears and diffuses Lung Qi
Constrained Lung Qi with Phlegm-Heat cough, hoarseness and a sore throat
Lung Heat or deficient Lung Yin causing a hoarse or lost voice and sore throat
Cough with thick yellow sputum, rattling in the throat, a dry throat and a bitter taste
Hoarseness, taken alone as a tea

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels
Mild to moderate constipation with dry stools from Heat clumped in the Intestines, often with headache, red eyes and fever; mild cases may take it alone

Helps rashes come out
Rashes that have not fully erupted, as a supporting external wash

lotus rhizome node
Lotus Rhizome Node
Lung · Stomach · Liver

Stops bleeding, restrains leakage of Blood and disperses stasis
Bleeding from Lung or Stomach Heat, particularly vomiting or coughing of blood
Nosebleed, blood in the urine and uterine bleeding
Chronic bleeding, combined with suitable herbs
Bleeding in the upper body (chest, nose, stomach) where some stasis is present, as it stops bleeding without leaving stasis behind

Clears Heat from the Blood
Blood Heat

pao jiang

Bencao Index

pei lan

Bencao Index

peng sha

Bencao Index

pi pa ye

Bencao Index

Herba Eupatorii
Eupatorium
Stomach · Spleen

Aromatically transforms Damp, awakens the Spleen and harmonises the Middle Jiao

Damp blocking the Middle Jiao: a stuffy chest, no appetite, nausea, distension of the epigastrium and abdomen, and a moist or greasy white tongue coat
Spleen-channel Damp-Heat: sweet, sticky mouth, copious thick saliva, bad breath and vomiting

Transforms Damp and releases Summerheat

Summerheat-Damp causing a mild fever, nausea and a heavy feeling
Damp-warmth febrile disease in its early stage

Aromatically clears turbid filth from the Middle Jiao, frees the Stomach and harmonises the Middle

Thick, turbid Damp building up in the Middle Jiao and binding Stomach Qi: lethargy, nausea, poor appetite, distending pain of the epigastrium and abdomen, and a tongue coat that is thick and greasy

Rhizoma Zingiberis Praeparatum
Charred Dried Ginger
Spleen · Liver

Warms the channels and stops bleeding

Uterine bleeding or spotting from Deficiency Cold
Bleeding and lochia that will not settle after childbirth, from Deficiency Cold
Blood in the stool from Deficiency Cold

Warms the Middle Jiao and disperses Cold

Dull, cold pain of the abdomen and epigastrium
Long-standing diarrhea or loose stools from Deficiency Cold

Enters the Blood level

Cold with Blood stasis after childbirth

Folium Eriobotryae
eriobotrya
Lung · Stomach

Transforms Phlegm, clears Lung Heat, descends Lung Qi and stops cough

Cough and wheezing from Lung Heat or Lung Dryness
Lung Heat with copious yellow sputum, a bitter taste and dry mouth
Dry cough with a dry mouth and red tongue from Dryness or Heat
Phlegm-Heat
Rebellious Lung Qi

Harmonises the Stomach, clears Stomach Heat and descends Stomach Qi

Hiccups, belching, nausea and vomiting with thirst from Stomach Heat
Vomiting with a sour smell and acid regurgitation
Rebellious Stomach Qi

Borax
borax
Lung · Stomach

Resolves toxicity and prevents putrefaction

Sore, swollen throat and mouth sores, taken internally or applied
White, weeping vaginal lesions or vaginal discharge
Mouth and gum ulcers, thrush, stomatitis and tonsillitis, as a gargle

Resolves toxicity, reduces swelling and benefits the eyes

Red, painful, swollen eyes and superficial visual obstruction; may be used alone

Clears Heat and transforms Phlegm

Stubborn Phlegm-Heat cough with sputum that is hard to bring up, taken internally in the past

Dries Damp and dissolves stones

Blistering between the toes from Damp
Stones with painful urination

pu gong ying

Bencao Index

pu huang

Bencao Index

qi cao

Bencao Index

qian cao gen

Bencao Index

Pollen Typhae
Cattail Pollen
Spleen · Heart · Liver

Stops bleeding by astringing
Bleeding from traumatic injury, applied externally
Internal bleeding of many kinds: uterine bleeding, vomiting or coughing blood, nosebleed, blood in the urine or stool, and bleeding under the skin

Invigorates Blood and dispels stasis
Pain from Blood stasis in the chest, in the abdomen after childbirth, or with menstruation

Promotes urination
Lin syndrome
Painful, bloody dribbling urination (Blood Lin)

Herba Taraxaci
Dandelion
Stomach · Liver

Reduces abscesses and dissipates nodules
Firm, hard abscesses and sores, internal or external (Chuang Yung), taken internally or applied
Breast abscess and acute mastitis, for which it is a first-choice herb
Intestinal abscess, including appendicitis-type presentations

Clears the Liver and brightens the eyes
Red, swollen, painful eyes from Liver-channel Heat; may be used alone as a steam
Liver Heat
Cirrhosis

Clears Heat, drains Damp and relieves painful urinary dysfunction
Damp-Heat Lin with painful urination
Damp-Heat jaundice
Damp-Heat presentations of hepatitis

Resolves Fire toxin
Fire toxin with a swollen, sore throat
Upper respiratory infection
Boils, furuncles and sores that are hot, red and swollen

Promotes lactation
Scanty or blocked milk from Heat and stagnation, often alongside mastitis

Clears Heat from the Blood
Fire constrained in the Spleen and Stomach

Radix et Rhizoma Rubiae
Indian madder root
Heart · Liver

Cools Blood and stops bleeding
Bleeding from Blood Heat: nosebleed, coughing or vomiting of blood, uterine bleeding, and blood in the urine or stool

Invigorates Blood and dispels stasis
Blood stasis pain, above all in the chest and flanks
Retained lochia
Painful, swollen injuries
Joint pain
Early-stage carbuncles

Unblocks the channels, vessels and menses
Wind causing pain of the joints and bones
Absent, late or blocked periods from Blood stasis

Disperses Wind-Damp
Bi pain

Cools the Liver and transforms Phlegm
Long-standing, stubborn cough with chest pain when Liver Fire attacks the Lungs

Liver
Invigorates Blood, breaks up stasis, disperses clumps, reduces swelling and relieves pain
Pain from injury or Blood stagnation, including bruising
Chronic amenorrhea and abdominal masses from Blood stasis
Chest pain from stasis
Wasting from Blood disorders
Abdominal distension
Gout
Tetanus
Resolves Fire toxin and reduces swelling
Pharyngitis and throat Bi
Corneal nebula
Erysipelas, carbuncles, sores, boils and hemorrhoids
Promotes lactation
Insufficient breast milk

qian hu

Bencao Index

qian li guang

Bencao Index

qian nian jian

Bencao Index

qian niu zi

Bencao Index

Herba Senecionis Scandentis

climbing groundsel

Lung · Large Intestine · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity and kills intestinal parasites

Damp-Heat skin disorders such as carbuncles, eczema, sores, pimples and inflamed lymph glands (Chuang Yung), taken internally or applied
Diarrhea, dysentery, enteritis and intestinal abscess
Jaundice
Influenza, tonsillitis, laryngitis, bronchitis and a swollen, painful throat
Septicemia
Damp fungal infections
Lead poisoning
Stomach or intestines abnormally swollen
Leptospirosis, malaria and scarlet fever
Urinary tract infection
Inflammation after surgery

Clears the Liver and brightens the eyes

Red, painful, swollen eyes
Bloodshot eyes from Wind-Fire, and nebula
Chronic conjunctivitis, trachoma, keratitis and corneal ulcer, as eye drops

Radix Peucedani

hogfennel root

Lung

Descends Qi and expels Phlegm

Lung Heat: cough and wheezing, copious thick sputum that is hard to bring up, and a tight, full chest

Disperses Wind-Heat

Headache and cough from Wind-Heat, especially where it has constrained the Lungs
Wind-Heat exterior pattern with fever and sore throat

Semen Pharbitidis

Morning Glory Seeds

Lung · Large Intestine · Small Intestine · Kidney

Drives out water through urination and bowel movement

Edema and ascites from accumulated pathogenic water or Damp, with constipation and scanty urine; a harsh expellant for severe Excess fluid build-up, which may be used alone
Constipation from accumulated Heat in the Stomach and Intestines

Descends Lung Qi and expels Phlegm-fluids (Tan Yin)

Cough, wheezing and a full chest and abdomen when thin mucus obstructs the Lungs

Unblocks the bowels and drains Damp-Heat

Constipation from Damp-Heat or Food stagnation lodged in the Stomach and Intestines, using a smaller amount

Expels intestinal parasites and reduces stagnation

Tapeworm or roundworm, with abdominal pain
Food or Qi stagnation with distension and constipation

Rhizoma Homalomenae

homalomena rhizome

Kidney · Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp and strengthens the sinews and bones

Wind-Cold-Damp Bi with pain, spasm or numbness, whether superficial or deep
Painful, stiff joints with numb, tight sinews
Soft or weak sinews and bones with spasm, particularly in older patients

Moves Qi

Painful swelling after injury
Tight, painful joints after an injury

qian shi

Bencao Index

qiang huo

Bencao Index

qin jiao

Bencao Index

qin pi

Bencao Index

Notopterygii Rhizoma Seu Radix
Notopterygium Root
Bladder · Kidney

Releases the Exterior and disperses Cold
Exterior Wind-Cold-Damp: chills and fever, headache, and a body that aches and feels heavy
Wind-Cold complicated by Damp, with joint pain, heaviness, sleepiness or pain at the back of the head

Expels Wind-Cold-Damp, unblocks Bi and relieves pain
Upper-body Wind-Cold-Damp Bi: aching, stiff arms, shoulders, upper back and occiput

Guides Qi to the Tai Yang and Du channels
Channel guide: in smaller amounts it leads a formula to the Tai Yang and Du vessels, toward the neck, upper back and occiput

Euryales
euryale seed
Spleen · Kidney

Strengthens the Spleen and stops diarrhea
Long-standing loose stools or diarrhea when Spleen Qi is weak; mild enough for children
Chronic diarrhea from internal Damp building up when the Spleen's transport is weak

Secures the Kidneys and astringes Jing
Weak Kidney Qi failing to hold: spermatorrhea, nocturnal emissions, premature ejaculation, bedwetting, and frequent or uncontrolled urination

Drains Damp and stops vaginal discharge
Vaginal discharge from deficiency or from Damp-Heat
White, watery discharge of Spleen-deficient type; for yellow discharge it is combined with herbs that clear Heat and dry Damp

Cortex Fraxini
ash bark
Large Intestine · Stomach · Gallbladder · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, dries Damp and astringes to stop diarrhea and dysentery
Damp-Heat diarrhea, dysentery or vaginal discharge
Damp-Heat dysentery with blood, which it restrains as well as clearing
Blood in the stool

Drains Liver Fire and brightens the eyes
Liver Fire affecting the eyes: redness, swelling and pain, styes, superficial visual obstruction or leukoma
Cataract-type eye conditions

Disperses Wind-Damp
Wind-Damp-Heat Bi

Calms wheezing, stops cough and resolves Phlegm
Wheezing and cough from Lung Heat
Bronchitis

Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae
Large Gentian Root
Stomach · Gallbladder · Liver

Expels Wind-Damp, unblocks the channels and relaxes the sinews and collaterals
Wind-Damp Bi with cramping, especially of the limbs
Bi of Hot or Cold type, and especially chronic joint aching that is not clearly either, since it is only mildly cold and moistening
Cold disorders, acute or chronic

Clears Deficiency Heat
Yin deficiency with Empty Fire, fever and steaming bone disorder
Yin deficiency with Heat: low-grade tidal fever, flushed cheeks, night sweats, and a hot chest, palms and soles

Drains Damp and relieves jaundice
Damp-Heat jaundice, acute or in infants

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels
Dry constipation

qing dai

Bencao Index

qing fen

Bencao Index

qing feng teng

Bencao Index

qing hao

Bencao Index

Large Intestine · Kidney · Liver

Kills parasites strongly, generates flesh and heals sores

- Skin parasites and fungal skin infections such as tinea
- Sores that have become ulcers and will not heal, combined with Blood-moving herbs
- Chronic weeping or discharging sores, and impetigo- or eczema-like lesions

Resolves toxicity and kills parasites

- Scabies, rosacea or syphilitic chancres, washed externally (the chancre use is historical and long superseded)

Expels water and unblocks the bowels and bladder

- Excess patterns with edema, retention of urine and constipation, taken internally in the past

Indigo Naturalis

Indigo
Lung · Spleen · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxin, cools Blood and reduces maculae

- Blotches or purpura from Heat at the Blood level
- Reckless bleeding from Blood Heat, particularly nosebleed; may be used alone
- Blood in the phlegm, or blood coughed up or vomited

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxin, cools Blood, disperses stagnation and reduces swelling

- Blazing Heat with an inflamed throat, difficulty swallowing, mouth sores or mumps, taken internally or applied
- Skin infections and lesions from Heat toxin

Drains Liver Fire, clears Summerheat and extinguishes Wind to stop tremor

- Heat, particularly Summerheat, affecting the Liver: convulsions, red eyes, sore throat and similar signs
- Febrile or childhood convulsions and spasm when Heat stirs Liver Wind

Clears Liver Fire, drains Lung Heat and cools Blood

- Cough from Lung Heat
- Liver Fire assailing the Lung, producing coughing, pain in the chest and phlegm streaked with blood

Herba Artemisiae

Sweet Wormwood
Kidney · Gallbladder · Liver

Clears Summerheat and Damp-Heat

- Summerheat: low-grade fever, headache, dizziness, a stuffy oppressed chest and heavy limbs, whether or not there is sweating

Clears Deficiency Heat

- Fever arising from deficient Yin or Blood, with afternoon or low-grade fever and heat in the palms, soles and chest
- Steaming bone fever, particularly when the patient does not sweat
- Lingering fever after a febrile illness

Clears Heat from the Ying level

- Late-stage febrile disease with Heat in the Ying level: fever at night and chills by morning, thirst, a flushed face and irritability

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

- Nosebleed or purpuric rash caused by Heat in the Blood

Checks malarial disorders and relieves fever

- Malaria-like disorders in which chills and fever alternate

Clears Liver and Gallbladder Heat and brightens the eyes

- Red eyes, dizziness and sensitivity to light, from Liver Yang rising or Liver Heat

Caulis Sinomenii

orientvine stem
Spleen · Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp, unblocks the channels and collaterals and relieves pain

- Wind-Damp Bi
- Numbness and itching
- Traumatic injury
- Swollen sores

Promotes urination

- Leg Qi with swelling and pain
- Edema and Damp swelling where urine is scanty

qing pi

Bencao Index

qing xiang zi

Bencao Index

qu mai

Bencao Index

quan shen

Bencao Index

Semen Celosiae
celosia seed
Liver

Clears Liver Fire, disperses Wind-Heat and brightens the eyes
Red, swollen, painful eyes from an external Wind-Heat invasion
Eye disorders from Liver Fire: corneal opacity, cataract-type clouding or blurred vision

Calms rising Liver Yang
High blood pressure from Liver Yang rising or Liver Fire
Headache from Wind-Heat

Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae Viride
green tangerine peel
Stomach · Gallbladder · Liver

Spreads Liver Qi and breaks up Qi stagnation
Liver Qi stagnation with distending pain of the chest, flanks or breasts
Breast lumps from constrained Liver Qi
Hernial (Shan) disorders with bulging pain, including Cold-type hernia
Abdominal pain, or prolapse of the intestine, when Liver Qi is stuck

Disperses accumulations, resolves nodules and reduces Food Stagnation
Accumulated food causing pain, distension, fullness or a stuffy feeling in the epigastrium or abdomen
Severe Food Stagnation
Masses, nodules and lumps where stagnant Qi has led on to Blood stasis

Dries Damp and transforms Phlegm
Malaria-like disorders with Phlegm-Damp
Breast abscess

Rhizoma Bistortae
Bistort Rhizome
Large Intestine · Stomach · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, reduces abscesses, transforms Phlegm and disperses nodules
Swellings and abscesses
Scrofula
Hemorrhoids
Febrile convulsions
Snakebite

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding
Bleeding from Heat: vomiting of blood, bleeding hemorrhoids, or dysentery with blood

Herba Dianthi
Dianthus
Heart · Small Intestine · Bladder

Clears Damp-Heat from the Bladder, promotes urination and relieves painful urinary dysfunction
Painful urinary dysfunction (Lin) from Damp-Heat, with dribbling or blood in the urine; especially suited to Blood Lin

Breaks up Blood stasis, invigorates Blood and regulates menstruation
Amenorrhea from Blood stasis, as a supporting herb
Menstrual cramps with clots from stagnant Blood

Unblocks the bowels
Constipation

Drains Fire from the Heart and Small Intestine
Heart Fire passing down to the Small Intestine as Excess Heat

Reduces swelling and heals sores
Gynecological swellings and sores attributed to toxin and Damp-Heat

quan xie

Bencao Index

ren dong teng

Bencao Index

ren shen

Bencao Index

rou cong rong

Bencao Index

Caulis Lonicerae
Honeysuckle Vine
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity
Skin eruptions and sores from milder Heat toxin

Dispels Wind-Damp, soothes the sinews and unblocks the channels
Bi from Wind, Damp or Heat, including Wind-Damp-Heat Bi
Itching from Wind

Cools the Blood
Heat in the Blood with early or heavy periods
Mastitis
Hot abdominal pain, as a supporting herb

Relieves inflammatory abdominal pain
Dysentery from Heat in the Blood

Clears Damp-Heat from the Lower Jiao
Lower Jiao Damp-Heat

Releases the Exterior and disperses Wind-Heat
Wind-Heat

Scorpio
Scorpion
Liver

Extinguishes Wind and stops spasms and convulsions
Liver Wind or Wind-Phlegm-Heat with spasms, tics, rigidity, arching of the back and seizures
Acute or chronic convulsions in children
Tetanus with lockjaw and stiffness
Epilepsy
Wind-stroke with a deviated eye and mouth, or hemiplegia

Searches out Wind, unblocks the channels and collaterals and stops pain
Stubborn headache or migraine
Obstinate Wind-Damp Bi and joint pain that has not yielded to milder herbs

Attacks Fire toxin and disperses nodules and rashes
Toxic sores and swellings, often applied topically
Scrofula and nodules
Cancer, applied topically

Herba Cistanches
Cistanche
Large Intestine · Kidney

Tonifies Kidney Yang, augments Jing, Blood and marrow, and warms the Womb
Kidney Yang deficiency: impotence, spermatorrhea, urinary incontinence or dribbling after urination, and cold, aching lower back and knees
Weakness of the knees and legs
A Cold, deficient Womb causing infertility, heavy uterine bleeding or vaginal discharge

Moistens the Intestines and moves the stool
Constipation from dry Intestines lacking fluids, in older or debilitated people or those with deficient Qi or Blood; in larger amounts it can be used on its own

Radix et Rhizoma Ginseng
ginseng
Lung · Spleen

Powerfully tonifies Yuan Qi
Collapse of Qi (abandoned condition): shallow or short breathing, cold limbs, heavy sweating and a faint, barely perceptible pulse, following major blood loss, excessive sweating, vomiting or diarrhea, or grave chronic illness; it may be given alone in this emergency
Collapse of Yang
Collapse of Yin

Tonifies Spleen and Stomach Qi
Spleen Qi deficiency with lethargy, poor appetite, nausea and vomiting, loose stools or long-standing diarrhea, a weak voice, and distension of the chest and abdomen
Prolapse of the stomach, uterus or rectum when the deficiency is severe

Tonifies Lung Qi
Deficient Lung Qi: wheezing, breathlessness, and weak, laboured breathing that worsens on exertion

Generates Body Fluids and stops thirst
Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder)
Qi and fluids damaged by high fever or heavy sweating

Tonifies Heart Qi, calms the Spirit and clears the mind
Heart Qi deficiency
Deficient Heart Qi and Blood, rooted in weak Yuan Qi, showing as palpitations, anxiety, poor sleep with vivid dreams, poor memory, and mental unrest or confusion

Tonifies Qi and Yang and benefits the Kidneys
Impotence, combined with Kidney Yang tonics

Supports Qi in deficient patients with an Exterior condition
An Exterior disorder on a background of Interior deficiency

rou dou kou

Bencao Index

rou gui

Bencao Index

ru xiang

Bencao Index

san leng

Bencao Index

Cortex Cinnamomi
cassia bark
Spleen · Heart · Kidney · Liver

Warms the Kidneys, Spleen and Heart and fortifies Yang and Ming Men Fire

Deficient Kidney Yang and Ming Men Fire: feeling cold, cold limbs, a weak and aching lower back and knees, impotence, and frequent clear urination
Spleen and Kidney Yang deficiency with a cold, painful abdomen, poor appetite and diarrhea
Wheezing when the Kidneys fail to grasp Qi
Heart Yang deficiency, above all with chest Bi

Disperses deep Cold, warms and unblocks the channels and vessels, and relieves pain

Qi stagnation and Blood stasis brought on by deep or Deficiency Cold; Cold in the Blood leads to absent or painful periods
Cold-Damp Bi
Yin-type boils (chronic, sunken sores that weep clear fluid), and sores or abscesses that fail to heal
Enters the Blood level; a small amount strengthens the Blood-moving effect of the other herbs in a formula

Leads Fire back to its source

Deficient Yang floating upward (true Cold with false Heat, or Heat above and Cold below): a flushed face, wheezing, oily sweat that pours out, cold and weak legs, and a deficient, rootless pulse
Upper-body Heat (dry mouth, sore throat or toothache that worsens at night) coexisting with lower-body Cold (low back pain, cold legs, diarrhea and a weak proximal pulse)

Assists the generation of Qi and Blood

Long-standing deficiency of Qi and Blood, as a small addition to a tonic formula

Rhizoma Sparganii
common burr reed tuber
Spleen · Liver

Forcefully breaks up Blood stasis, moves Qi and relieves pain

Severe, stubborn Blood stasis with abdominal masses that can be felt
Amenorrhea, painful periods or abdominal pain after childbirth, from Blood stasis

Dissolves accumulations

Stagnant food and Qi causing severe abdominal pain and distension

Regulates menstruation

Irregular periods

Promotes lactation

Absent breast milk

Semen Myristicae
nutmeg
Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen

Binds the Intestines and stops diarrhea

Long-standing, stubborn diarrhea, or diarrhea at daybreak, from Spleen and Kidney Yang deficiency

Warms the Middle Jiao, moves Qi and relieves pain

Deficiency Cold of the Spleen and Stomach with epigastric and abdominal pain and bloating, a cold abdomen, poor appetite and vomiting
Cold obstructing the Middle Jiao, with fullness of the epigastrium and abdomen and nausea or vomiting
Qi stagnation

Olibanum
boswellin
Spleen · Heart · Liver

Invigorates Blood and moves Qi

Pain from Blood stasis after traumatic injury
Toxic sores, carbuncles and painful swellings in their early stage
Chest, epigastric or abdominal pain from Blood stasis
Amenorrhea and painful periods

Relaxes the sinews, opens the channels and relieves pain

Wind-Damp Bi with stiffness and spasm

Reduces swelling and generates flesh (topical)

Applied as an ointment or powder to ease swelling and pain and help sores, ulcers, carbuncles and injuries heal
Painful, red, swollen gums, mouth or throat

san qi

Bencao Index

sang bai pi

Bencao Index

sang ji sheng

Bencao Index

sang piao xiao

Bencao Index

Cortex Mori
Mulberry Root Bark
Lung

Drains Lung Heat, stops cough and calms wheezing

Lung Heat with cough, wheezing, fullness of the chest or coughing of blood

Promotes urination and reduces edema

Lung Heat blocking the Lungs' descending function, so that water stops moving and sweating ceases: puffy face and arms, edema of the floating type, fever, thirst, difficult urination and a floating pulse

Edema of the whole body, or water collecting in the Lungs

Lowers blood pressure

Hypertension

Radix Notoginseng
Notoginseng Root
Stomach · Liver

Stops bleeding and transforms Blood stasis

Bleeding, internal or external, checked without leaving stasis behind

Blood in the vomit, nosebleed, hematuria or bloody stools

Reduces swelling and relieves pain

Falls and knocks (die da): bruised, swollen, painful areas where Blood has stagnated

Mild tonic (traditional use)

Convalescence and fatigue, as a folk remedy cooked into chicken soup

Mantidis Ootheca
Mantis Egg Case
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies the Kidneys, assists Yang, secures Jing and holds urine

Kidney Yang deficiency with frequent or dribbling urination, and seminal emissions, particularly those that occur without dreams

Spermatorrhea from Kidney deficiency

Bedwetting in children

Impotence

Astringes and stops vaginal discharge

Leukorrhea from Kidney deficiency

Herba Taxilli
Chinese taxillus
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies Liver and Kidney Yin, strengthens the sinews and bones and expels Wind-Damp

Bi pain on a base of Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency, with or without Wind-Damp: a sore, painful lower back, knees and legs, joint trouble, numbness, and weak or wasting sinews and bones

Chronic weakness and aching joints in older or Yin-deficient patients

Nourishes Blood and calms the fetus

Restless fetus, with low back pain or spotting

Uterine bleeding during pregnancy

Poor milk supply

Nourishes Blood and benefits the skin

Dry, flaky skin from Blood deficiency

sang shen

Bencao Index

sang ye

Bencao Index

sang zhi

Bencao Index

sha ren

Bencao Index

Folium Mori
mulberry leaf
Lung · Liver

Disperses Wind-Heat

Early invasion of Wind-Heat, with fever, headache, a sore throat and a cough

Calms the Liver and brightens the eyes

Red, swollen, sore or irritated eyes from Wind-Heat or Heat in the Liver channel; taken internally or used as an eyewash
Liver channel eye problems from Yin deficiency, with dry or blurred eyes
Liver Yang rising with dizziness, and eyes that are red, dry, sore or painful, or see spots

Clears Lung Heat, stops cough and moistens Dryness

Cough from Lung Heat, with thick yellow sputum
Dry cough and dry mouth from Lung Dryness

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Mild bleeding from Heat in the Blood, such as vomiting of blood or blood-streaked sputum

Fructus Mori
Mulberry
Heart · Kidney · Liver

Tonifies Blood and enriches Yin

Deficient Blood and Yin with dizziness, ringing in the ears, blurred vision, insomnia, palpitations and early greying of the hair
Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder) from Yin deficiency

Moistens the Intestines

Constipation from dryness when Blood, Yin or fluids are insufficient

Generates Body Fluids

Thirst and a dry mouth from depleted fluids

Moistens the Lungs and throat

Dry cough and throat from depleted fluids

Fructus Amomi
Amomum Fruit
Stomach · Spleen

Moves Qi, aromatically transforms Damp, strengthens the Spleen and stops vomiting

Stagnant Qi or Damp obstructing the Spleen and Stomach: epigastric and abdominal bloating and pain, indigestion, poor appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

Warms the Middle Jiao and stops diarrhea

Watery diarrhea containing undigested food, from Cold in the Spleen and Stomach

Calms the fetus

Morning sickness
Restless fetus due to Cold or stagnant Qi, showing as spotting or abdominal pain

Prevents tonics from causing stagnation

Middle Jiao congestion brought on by tonifying herbs

Ramulus Mori
Mulberry Twig
Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp, unblocks the channels and collaterals, benefits the joints and stops spasms

Wind-Damp with spasm, especially Hot Bi of the arms, with hot, red or swollen joints and aching muscles
Shoulder, arm and hand pain from Wind-Damp; as a twig it guides the formula to the upper limbs
Numbness of the limbs, or hemiplegia, remaining after Wind-stroke

Promotes urination and reduces edema

Edema or difficult urination with joint pain or heavy, aching limbs

sha shen

Bencao Index

sha yuan zi

Bencao Index

shan ci gu

Bencao Index

shan dou gen

Bencao Index

Semen Astragali Complanati
Complanate Astragalus Seed
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies Kidney Yang and secures Jing

Kidney Yang deficiency with low back pain, ringing in the ears, impotence, premature ejaculation, frequent urination or incontinence, and vaginal discharge
Spermatorrhea

Secures the Kidneys and reduces urination

Bedwetting, frequent urination, or dribbling and leaking urine when Kidney Qi fails to hold

Stops vaginal discharge

Thin, clear discharge without odour, from Kidney deficiency

Nourishes the Liver and Kidneys and brightens the eyes

Poor or blurry eyesight when Liver Blood is deficient
Blurred vision and dizziness from Liver and Kidney deficiency

Strengthens the lower back and knees

Sore, weak lower back and knees from Kidney deficiency

Nourishes Lung Yin and clears Lung Heat

Dry cough, or a cough bringing up small amounts of sticky phlegm with difficulty
Lung Yin deficiency with Heat causing a dry throat and hoarseness

Resolves Phlegm

Lung dryness complicated by scanty, tenacious phlegm, where a purely moistening herb would not suffice

Nourishes Stomach Yin and generates Fluids

Stomach Yin deficiency with a dry mouth, thirst, poor appetite and a dry red tongue
Fluids damaged by a febrile illness

Mildly tonifies Qi

Radix Sophorae Tonkinensis
Bushy Sophora
Lung · Large Intestine

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxin and benefits the throat

Swollen, painful throat, including tonsillitis and pharyngitis presentations; taken alone or used as a gargle

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxin and reduces swelling

Toxic sores, including abscesses and carbuncles
Cancers, especially of the throat and Lungs, and as an adjunct in bladder cancer
Applied externally to hot swellings, ulcers of the scalp, scabies, and snake, dog or spider bites
Gingivitis and swelling of the cervix

Benefits the Lungs

Cough from Lung Heat

Clears Damp-Heat and relieves jaundice

Damp-Heat jaundice

Cremastrae
Cremastra
Stomach · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxin, reduces abscesses and dissipates nodules

Serious toxic lesions: sores, abscesses, boils, carbuncles and toxic swellings
Scrofula and Phlegm nodules
Goiter and thyroid nodules

Resolves toxicity, dissipates masses and reduces swelling

Masses, chiefly abdominal, including tumors; classically also masses of the esophagus
In modern integrative practice, a supporting herb alongside standard care for tumors of the breast, liver and lung

Counteracts venom

Snake and insect bites, taken internally or applied to the skin

shan yao

Bencao Index

shan zha

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shan zhu yu

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shang lu

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Fructus Crataegi
Chinese hawthorn fruit
Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Reduces Food Stagnation and transforms accumulations

Stagnation from meat or greasy, fatty food, with abdominal bloating, pain, indigestion or diarrhea
Food stagnation on a background of Spleen deficiency, combined with Spleen-strengthening herbs

Transforms Blood stasis, invigorates Blood and dissipates clumps

Abdominal pain and clumps after childbirth from Blood stasis
Amenorrhea with Blood stasis
Hernia and bulging disorders

Stops diarrhea

Chronic diarrhea of a dysentery-like kind, using the charred or toasted herb

Lowers blood pressure and cholesterol

High blood pressure
Raised serum cholesterol
Coronary heart disease and angina

Rhizoma Dioscoreae
common yam rhizome
Lung · Spleen · Kidney

Tonifies Spleen and Stomach Qi and Yin and stops diarrhea

Spleen or Stomach deficiency with loose stools or diarrhea, tiredness, poor appetite, spontaneous sweating, bloating after meals and a pale tongue; may be used alone in larger amounts

Tonifies Lung Qi and Yin

Chronic cough and wheezing from Lung Qi or Yin deficiency; where Yin deficiency predominates, sputum is scant or sticky

Nourishes Yin and treats wasting and thirsting disorder

Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder) from Qi and Yin deficiency; nourishing and mildly astringent without being drying, and usable alone in larger amounts

Tonifies Kidney Qi and Yin and secures Jing

Kidney deficiency with spermatorrhea, frequent urination and vaginal discharge

Radix Phytolaccae
phytolacca
Large Intestine · Spleen · Bladder · Kidney

Drives out water through the urine and stool

Excess-type edema or ascites with severe constipation, abdominal distension and difficult urination, only in a patient strong enough to bear a harsh purge

Reduces sores and carbuncles

Hot-type sores, boils and abscesses, with the fresh root pounded and applied externally

Removes Phlegm, stops cough and resolves lumps

Lung disorders

Reduces swelling and disperses nodules

Swellings and nodules, with the crushed root applied to the skin

Fructus Corni
Asiatic cornelian cherry fruit
Kidney · Liver

Stabilizes the Kidneys and secures Jing and Body Fluids

Leakage from weak Jing: frequent urination, incontinence, bedwetting, spermatorrhea and heavy sweating

Stops excessive sweating and rescues collapse

Collapse of Qi with heavy sweating and shock
Collapse of Yang with heavy sweating and shock
Profuse spontaneous sweating
Sweating brought on by mistaken use of diaphoretic treatment

Tonifies Liver and Kidney Yin and strengthens Kidney Yang

Deficient Liver and Kidney Yin together with Kidney Yang deficiency: light-headedness, dizziness, blurred vision, a sore and weak lower back and knees, or impotence

Stabilizes the menses and stops bleeding

Heavy uterine bleeding, or long or irregular periods, from deficiency (a mild effect)

she chuang zi

Bencao Index

she gan

Bencao Index

she tui

Bencao Index

she xiang

Bencao Index

Rhizoma Belamcandae
Belamcanda Rhizome
Lung

Clears Heat, resolves Fire toxin and benefits the throat

Hot, swollen, painful throat from Excess Fire, Fire toxin or Phlegm-Heat obstructing the Upper Jiao
Hoarseness or loss of voice
Sore throat, for which it may be used on its own

Transforms Phlegm, clears the Lungs, directs Lung Qi downward and calms wheezing

Cough and wheezing from Phlegm obstruction, with plentiful thick sputum that is hard to expel and a rattling, blocked feeling in the throat and chest
Lung Heat asthma
Cold-Phlegm obstruction, when combined with warming herbs

Reduces swelling and nodules

Swollen glands and lumps of the neck from accumulated Phlegm and Heat

Fructus Cnidii
cnidium fruit
Kidney

Dries Damp, kills parasites and stops itching (topical)

Weeping, itchy skin lesions, especially of the genital area, treated with a wash, powder or ointment
Eczema, scabies, ringworm and tinea
Itching of the vulva or vagina, trichomonas infection included

Disperses Cold, dispels Wind and dries Damp

Thin, clear vaginal discharge from Cold-Damp, with Kidney Yang deficiency and Damp in the Lower Jiao
Low back pain from Wind-Cold-Damp lodged in the Kidneys and Du channel
Painful joints from Cold-Damp Bi, in combination with further warming herbs

Warms and tonifies the Kidneys and strengthens Yang

Impotence or infertility from Kidney Yang deficiency or a Cold Womb
Sore, weak lower back and knees from Kidney Yang deficiency

Moschus
Musk
Spleen · Heart · Liver

Powerfully opens the Orifices and Luo vessels, revives the Spirit and unblocks closed disorders

Warm-pathogen disease with Ying-level Heat attacking the Pericardium: convulsions, delirium, stupor and fainting
Closed disorders of Yang, Yin or Phlegm type, with coma, delirium or seizures; paired with cooling herbs when the closure is Hot and warming herbs when it is Cold
Wind-stroke
Tetanic collapse
Seizures

Invigorates Blood, dissipates masses, reduces swelling, resolves toxicity, opens the channels and relieves pain

Serious Blood stasis: fixed palpable masses, amenorrhea, and chest or abdominal pain
Red, hot, swollen toxic sores and carbuncles, used internally or on the skin
Channels and collaterals blocked by traumatic injury or by painful obstruction (Bi)
Coronary artery disease

Hastens delivery and expels a dead fetus

Difficult labour
A dead fetus or placenta that will not come down

Periostracum Serpentis
Snake Skin Slough
Liver

Dispels Wind and stops spasms

Skin lesions from Wind, including itchy rashes attributed to Wind-Heat
Internal Wind patterns such as convulsions in children, epilepsy and seizures

Removes superficial visual obstruction and benefits the eyes

Pterygium, or corneal disorders such as nebulae; often paired with Chan Tui

Resolves toxicity

Toxic conditions: sore throat, ulcers of the mouth, carbuncles, hemorrhoids and scabies

shen jin cao

Bencao Index

shen qu

Bencao Index

sheng di huang

Bencao Index

sheng jiang

Bencao Index

Massa Medicata Fermentata

Medicated Leaven
Stomach · Spleen

Reduces Food Stagnation, aids digestion and harmonizes the Stomach

Food stagnation or accumulation with Stomach Cold: fullness and distension of the epigastrium or abdomen, poor appetite and digestion, borborygmus and diarrhea
Stagnation from starchy grain foods, and the after-effects of alcohol

Moves Qi

Qi stagnation

Herba Lycopodii

common clubmoss
Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Dispels Wind and eliminates Damp

Wind-Damp or Wind-Cold-Damp Bi with joint pain, stiffness and numb limbs, especially when the joints are hard to flex and extend

Relaxes the sinews, invigorates the collaterals and moves Blood

Tight or stiff sinews and muscles with cramping, and trouble bending or straightening the joints
Swelling and pain from Blood stasis after external or internal injury, including sprains, strains and bruising
Stiffness in bending and stretching following hemiplegia

Rhizoma Zingiberis Recens

Fresh Ginger Rhizome
Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Releases the Exterior, induces sweating and disperses Cold

Wind-Cold
A mild Wind-Cold Exterior pattern combined with Stomach Cold, bringing vomiting, loose bowels, and a full, painful abdomen

Warms the Middle Jiao and stops vomiting

Stomach Cold, particularly when vomiting is present

Warms the Lungs, disperses Cold and stops cough

Wind-Cold cough
Cough from Lung deficiency with Phlegm
Chronic Lung complaints with thin, white phlegm

Reduces the toxicity of other herbs and of seafood

Seafood poisoning
Toxicity from other herbs, including moderating processed Fu Zi and Ban Xia, with which it is often cooked

Harmonizes the Ying and Wei

Tai Yang wind-strike (Zhong Feng): deficient-type Wind-Cold Exterior deficiency that sweating alone does not resolve, paired with Da Zao

Radix Rehmanniae

Rehmannia Root
Heart · Kidney · Liver

Clears Heat and cools the Blood

Heat in the Ying level with very high fever, thirst and a scarlet tongue
Heat in the Xue level
Bleeding from Heat in the Blood: nosebleed, coughing or spitting of blood, blood in the urine, and uterine bleeding

Nourishes Yin, generates fluids and treats wasting and thirsting

Heat signs from deficient Heart Yin
Fluids damaged by Heat, with a dry mouth
Sore throat from Yin deficiency
Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder, diabetes)
Constipation when fluids are depleted

Clears Heart Fire

Heart Fire, or Heat from deficient Heart Yin, with irritability, restlessness, insomnia, and sores of the mouth and tongue

sheng jiang pi

Bencao Index

sheng ma

Bencao Index

sheng tie luo

Bencao Index

shi chang pu

Bencao Index

Rhizoma Cimicifugae
Cimicifuga
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen

Releases the Exterior and vents measles
Headache from Wind-Heat
Measles in the early stage, or a rash that has not fully come out

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity, especially in the upper body
Fire toxin in the upper or surface parts of the body: toothache, swollen or painful gums, ulcers of the lips or gums, mouth sores, and a sore, swollen throat
Sores or maculae in Warm-Heat pathogen diseases
Epidemic toxic swellings affecting the face and head

Raises Yang and lifts sunken Qi
Sinking or deficient Middle Qi with shortness of breath, fatigue and prolapse
Spasm of the Dai channel

Guides other herbs upward
Directing a formula's action toward the head and upper body

Cortex Zingiberis Rhizomatis
Ginger Peel
Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Promotes urination and reduces edema
Edema where fluid sits near the surface, in the skin and flesh, not in the deeper interior; its main use

Harmonises the Middle Jiao
An unsettled stomach with distension (a lighter, secondary use)

Rhizoma Acori Tatarinowii
acorus
Stomach · Heart

Opens the Orifices, transforms Phlegm, clears turbidity, calms the Spirit and disperses Wind
Phlegm-Damp clouding the Heart and sensory orifices: deafness, ringing in the ears, dizziness, poor memory, dull senses, disorientation, and seizures or stupor
Seizures or stupor from Wind-Phlegm
Restlessness, forgetfulness and poor concentration from Phlegm-Damp

Transforms turbid Damp, harmonizes the Middle Jiao, awakens the Spleen and moves Qi
Damp and turbidity obstructing the Spleen and Stomach: fullness and lumps in the chest and epigastrium, poor appetite, and abdominal fullness and pain
Middle Jiao Damp-Heat

Promotes Blood flow, reduces swelling, and treats Wind-Damp Bi and sores
Wind-Cold-Damp Bi
Sores, treated internally or on the skin
Traumatic injury

Benefits the throat
Hoarseness from laryngitis or inflamed vocal cords

Ferri Frusta
Oxidized Iron Filings
Heart · Liver

Calms the Liver and subdues rising Liver Yang
Irritability, agitation, bad temper and angry outbursts from Liver Excess

Sedates and anchors the Spirit
Palpitations, insomnia, fright and being easily startled

Clears Heat and resolves Phlegm-Fire disturbing the Heart
Mania and withdrawal (Dian Kuang)
Delirium in febrile disease

Resolves toxicity and helps close sores (topical)
Wounds and sores, dusted with the powder; a minor, largely historical use

shi da gong lao ye

Bencao Index

shi di

Bencao Index

shi gao

Bencao Index

shi hu

Bencao Index

Calyx Kaki
kaki
Lung · Stomach

Directs Qi downward and stops hiccups
Hiccups or belching from Stomach disharmony; being neutral, it suits Hot and Cold cases alike, while companion herbs set the temperature
Nausea and retching from rebellious Stomach Qi

Folium Mahoniae
ilecis leaf
Lung

Clears Heat, nourishes Yin, stops cough and transforms Phlegm
Fever from Yin deficiency Heat
Pulmonary tuberculosis
Cough, or coughing of blood
Sore, weak and painful lower back and knees
Dizziness and ringing in the ears
Sores and boils
Red eyes

Caulis Dendrobii
Dendrobium
Stomach · Kidney

Nourishes Stomach Yin, generates fluids and clears Heat
Fluids injured in a warm-pathogen disease: a parched mouth and throat, severe thirst, irritability, sweating, or fever that will not settle

Enriches Kidney Yin and clears Deficiency Heat
Deficiency Heat with depleted fluids: stubborn low-grade fever, a dry sore throat and a red tongue without coat
Long-standing unproductive cough accompanied by mild fever and night sweating, combined with further Yin tonics

Tonifies the Kidneys, augments Jing, brightens the eyes and strengthens the sinews, bones and lower back
Kidney and Liver deficiency with dim or blurred vision, spots before the eyes, dizziness, and a weak, painful lower back
Numbness of the limbs, or Wei (atrophy) syndrome

Nourishes Stomach and Lung Yin
Empty Fire flaring up from deficient Yin of the Stomach and Lungs

Gypsum Fibrosum
Gypsum
Lung · Stomach

Clears Heat from the Qi level, drains Fire, eases irritability and relieves thirst
Qi-level or Yang Ming Heat: high fever without chills, irritability and restlessness, intense thirst, heavy sweating, a big flooding pulse, red tongue, yellow coat
Encephalitis

Clears Excess Heat from the Lungs
Cough and wheezing from Lung Heat, with fever and sticky, thick yellow phlegm

Clears blazing Stomach Fire
Stomach Fire flaring upward with headache, toothache, inflamed painful gums and thirst

Heals eczema, burns, and ulcerated sores and wounds
Sores and wounds, applied topically (in the calcined form) or taken internally

shi jian chuan

Bencao Index

shi jue ming

Bencao Index

shi jun zi

Bencao Index

shi liu pi

Bencao Index

Concha Haliotidis

Abalone Shell

Kidney · Liver

Drains Liver Fire, calms the Liver and anchors Liver Yang

Liver Fire or Liver Yang rising with headache, dizziness or vertigo, and red or swollen eyes, including Yang rising on a base of Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency
High blood pressure from Liver Yang rising

Brightens the eyes and clears superficial visual obstruction

Eye problems from Liver Heat: sensitivity to light, pterygium, nebulae, cataract or other surface obstruction, red eyes and blurred vision

Wind-Heat eye problems when combined with Wind-Heat herbs, or eye symptoms rooted in Blood deficiency when combined with Blood-nourishing herbs

Calms internal Wind

Liver Wind

Clears Stomach Fire and stops pain and bleeding

Stomach Fire with acid reflux, heartburn, stomach pain or bleeding ulcers; the calcined shell is preferred

Herba Salviae Chinensis

Chinese sage

Lung · Stomach · Spleen · Heart · Pericardium · Liver

Invigorates, cools and nourishes the Blood and calms the Shen

Uterine bleeding
Abdominal pain after menstruation
Amenorrhea
Abdominal pain after childbirth
Joint pain from Wind-Damp
Various cancers

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, promotes urination, dissipates nodules and reduces swelling

Bone pain
Abscesses and carbuncles
Scrofula
Swellings
Hepatitis
Difficulty swallowing
Asthma with excessive Phlegm
Vaginal discharge tinged red

Pericarpium Granati

Pomegranate Husk

Large Intestine · Stomach

Binds the Intestines and stops diarrhea and dysentery

Chronic, watery diarrhea from Deficiency Cold
Dysentery, including chronic Damp-Heat dysentery once past its early Excess stage, when combined with Heat-clearing, Damp-drying herbs
Rectal prolapse

Stabilizes the Kidneys and secures Jing

Kidney Jing deficiency
Heavy uterine bleeding or vaginal discharge when the Kidneys fail to hold

Kills parasites

Tapeworm, roundworm and hookworm, often with Bing Lang
Tinea, applied topically

Stops bleeding

Persistent metrorrhagia; leukorrhea
Bleeding from injury, using the powder

Fructus Quisqualis

fructus quisqualis

Stomach · Spleen

Kills parasites

Roundworm above all, and pinworm; may be used on its own
Threadworm and hookworm
Scabies

Strengthens the Spleen, dissolves accumulations and improves digestion

Childhood nutritional impairment (Gan Ji) with poor appetite, abdominal distension, emaciation, a sallow complexion or a weak constitution, often with parasites

shi nan ye

Bencao Index

shi shang bai

Bencao Index

shi wei

Bencao Index

shu di huang

Bencao Index

Herba Selaginellae Doederleinii

selaginella

Liver

Clears Heat and resolves Fire toxin

Fever with cough from Lung Heat

Sore, swollen throat

Fever sores and ulcers

Upper respiratory infection, pneumonia and inflamed lymph glands

Clears and drains Damp-Heat

Damp-Heat jaundice

Ascites from cirrhosis of the liver

Bladder Damp-Heat

Invigorates Blood, disperses stasis, reduces tumors and breaks up accumulations

Cancers of the lung, nasopharynx, esophagus, liver and skin, commonly prescribed alongside conventional cancer care

Cirrhosis, or long-term hepatitis

Folium Photiniae

Chinese photinia leaf

Kidney · Liver

Dispels Wind, unblocks the channels and tonifies the Kidneys

Impotence

Spermatorrhea

Soreness and weakness of the lower back and knees

Rheumatic joint pain

Migraine

Rubella

Radix Rehmanniae Praeparata

Cooked Rehmannia Root

Heart · Kidney · Liver

Nourishes Blood

Blood deficiency with a pale or sallow face, dizziness, palpitations and insomnia

Irregular periods, uterine bleeding or bleeding after childbirth arising from Blood deficiency (not from Blood stasis)

Nourishes Liver and Kidney Yin

Deficient Liver and Kidney Yin: a weak, aching lower back, knees and limbs, dizziness or vertigo, ringing in the ears or hearing loss, tidal fever with five-palm heat, sweating at night, seminal emission, a peeled tongue coat and a pulse that is weak and rapid

Strongly enriches Yin and relieves wasting and thirsting disorder

Xiao Ke of the Lower Jiao with frequent or copious urination; may be used on its own

Nourishes Jing and Blood and fills the Marrow

Depleted Jing and Blood in adults: premature ageing and greying, impotence, poor memory, a dulled mind and flat affect

Slow growth and development in children

Stops cough and calms wheezing

Cough, wheezing, asthma or shortness of breath when deficient Kidneys cannot grasp Qi

Folium Pyrrosiae

Pyrrosia Leaf

Lung · Bladder

Clears Damp-Heat, promotes urination, relieves painful urinary dysfunction and expels stones

Damp-Heat Lin, in which urinating burns and hurts and may bring dribbling, blood or stones

Stone or Blood Lin

Edema

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Bleeding from Heat in the Blood: vomiting of blood, nosebleed, uterine bleeding, heavy periods, and blood in the urine

Bleeding from trauma

Clears the Lungs, expels Phlegm and stops cough

Lung Heat and Phlegm causing wheeze and cough

shui hong hua zi

Bencao Index

shui niu jiao

Bencao Index

shui zhi

Bencao Index

si gua luo

Bencao Index

Cornu Bubali
buffalo horn
Stomach · Heart · Liver

Clears Heat from the Ying and Xue levels, resolves Fire toxin, cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Heat in the Ying or Xue level, or in the Blood, with very high fever and Blood moving recklessly: erythema, purpura, nosebleed, vomiting of blood, convulsions and delirium

Clears Heat and stops tremors

Warm-Heat disease that has reached the Ying or Xue level, with high fever that will not break, loss of consciousness, delirium, convulsions or manic behaviour

Fructus Polygoni Orientalis
princes-feather fruit
Spleen · Liver

Dissipates Blood stasis, breaks up stagnation, tonifies the Spleen and promotes urination

Scrofula
Sores and boils
Stomach ache
Abdominal masses and distension
Poor appetite
Ascites
Acute conjunctivitis

Fructus Luffae Retinervus
Loofah
Lung · Stomach · Liver

Resolves toxicity and reduces swelling

Toxic swellings, sores and abscesses
Breast abscess (mastitis)

Unblocks the channels and collaterals and dispels Wind

Wind-Damp Bi with aching muscles and sinews and stiff, rigid joints, particularly when Phlegm is involved
Wandering, Wind-type pain of the joints and sinews
Chest and flank soreness or pain from Qi and Blood stagnation, including after injury
Traumatic injury

Unblocks the collaterals of the breast

Distended, tender breasts or breast lumps
Scanty or blocked milk flow

Expels Phlegm and clears Phlegm-Heat

Lung Heat cough in adults or children, with high fever, chest pain and thick, sticky yellow sputum that will not come up easily

Stops bleeding (charred form)

Blood in the stool and uterine bleeding, using the charred herb

Hirudo
Leech
Bladder · Liver

Breaks up and drives out Blood stasis and reduces fixed masses

Stubborn, fixed, long-standing Blood stasis
Palpable, immovable abdominal or uterine masses (Zheng Jia) from congealed Blood
Absent periods caused by obstructing Blood stasis, not by deficiency
Bruising, swelling and pain after traumatic injury

Clears the water passages

Induces abortion

song hua fen

Bencao Index

song jie

Bencao Index

su he xiang

Bencao Index

su mu

Bencao Index

Lignum Pini Nodi
Chinese pine node
Liver

- Dispels Wind, dries Damp and relieves pain**
 - Wind-Damp Bi with sore, aching joints, mainly where Damp or Cold predominates
 - Stiff joints with wandering, aching Bi pain that Cold makes worse
 - Wind-Cold Bi
 - Traumatic injury with pain

- Strengthens the sinews and muscles and opens the channels**
 - Wei syndrome

Pollen Pini
pine pollen
Spleen · Liver

- Expels Wind, moves Qi and dries Damp**
 - Wind-Damp Bi
 - Swelling of the head, applied topically
- Stops bleeding and promotes tissue regeneration**
 - Carbuncles
 - Scabies
 - Eczema
 - Bleeding from cuts

Lignum Sappan
Sappan Wood
Spleen · Heart · Liver

- Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis, reduces swelling, opens the channels and relieves pain**
 - Blood stasis causing amenorrhea or abdominal pain after childbirth, with fixed, stabbing lower abdominal pain
 - Swelling and pain from Blood stasis after falls, fractures, bruising or sprains; used internally and topically

- Stops bleeding**
 - Heavy bleeding after childbirth

Styrax
Resin Of Rose Maloes
Spleen · Heart

- Opens the Orifices, revives the Spirit and penetrates turbidity**
 - Closed disorders, especially Cold ones: abrupt collapse or unconsciousness when Wind-stroke of Cold type, or Phlegm clouding the Heart, blocks awareness
 - Phlegm collapse
 - Epidemic toxic diseases
- Warms and disperses Cold, opens stagnation, moves Qi, clears turbidity and relieves pain**
 - Cold or Phlegm stagnation with a stifling chest, Cold fullness, and pain of the chest, epigastrium or abdomen
 - Coronary artery disease and angina-type chest pain
 - Biliary colic
 - Chilblains, applied topically

suan zao ren

Bencao Index

suo yang

Bencao Index

tai zi shen

Bencao Index

tan xiang

Bencao Index

Herba Cynomorii
Fleshy Stem Of Cynomorium
Large Intestine · Kidney · Liver

Tonifies Kidney Yang, benefits Jing and marrow, nourishes Liver Yin and Blood, and strengthens the sinews and bones

- Kidney Yang and Jing deficiency with impotence, infertility, frequent urination and seminal emission
- Sore, weak lower back and knees
- Weakness of the sinews when Jing and Blood are depleted
- Wei (atrophy) syndrome with weak or impaired legs, following injury to Liver and Kidney Yin

Moistens the Intestines, unblocks the bowels and nourishes Blood

- Dry stools without Heat signs when Qi, Blood, Yang or Jing is deficient

Semen Zipiphi Spinosae
spiny date seed
Spleen · Heart · Gallbladder · Liver

Nourishes Heart Yin and Liver Blood and calms the Spirit

- Heart Yin or Liver Blood deficiency with Deficiency Fire rising: irritability, sleeplessness, palpitations and anxiety
- Dream-disturbed sleep

Astringes sweat and generates Fluids

- Night sweats or spontaneous sweating

Lignum Santali Albi
Sandalwood
Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Moves Qi, harmonises the Middle Jiao and Stomach, and relieves pain

- Chest and abdominal pain from Qi stagnation
- Epigastric and abdominal pain with belching, hiccups, poor appetite and nausea rising into the chest and throat
- Vomiting of clear fluid

Disperses Cold, aids digestion and relieves pain

- Stomach Cold
- Cold-type pain of the abdomen and epigastrium
- Tight, constricting chest pain with a sense of oppression and laboured breathing

Removes Blood stasis

- Blood stasis

Used for coronary artery disease

- Coronary artery disease

Radix Pseudostellariae
heterophylly false satarwort root
Lung · Spleen

Strengthens the Spleen and tonifies Qi

- Fatigue and poor appetite from Spleen and Stomach deficiency
- Stomach Yin deficiency
- A mild tonic, usually combined with other herbs, suited to children and to convalescence

Generates Body Fluids

- Damaged Fluids and weakness following a febrile illness, with thirst
- Children with persistent fever or Summerheat

Tonifies Lung Qi and Yin

- Spontaneous sweating from weak Lung Qi
- Lung Yin deficiency with Dryness
- A weak, dry cough and shortness of breath on a background of Dryness
- Lung deficiency

tao ren

Bencao Index

tian hua fen

Bencao Index

tian kui zi

Bencao Index

tian ma

Bencao Index

Radix Trichosanthis

snakegourd root

Lung · Stomach

Clears Heat and generates Fluids

Thirst and irritability from Heat and Dryness in the Lungs

Thirst from Yin deficiency

Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder)

Heat with irritability, a dry mouth, lips and tongue, and a craving for cold drinks

Clears Lung Heat, transforms Phlegm and moistens Dryness

Phlegm-Heat lodged above the diaphragm, above all when

Heat has turned into Dryness

Thick or blood-streaked phlegm, sticky and hard to bring up, with a dry cough

Relieves toxicity, expels pus and reduces swelling

Breast abscess, treated both internally and topically

Carbuncles and sores that are red, swollen and painful

Hemorrhoids

Semen Persicae

Peach Kernel

Lung · Large Intestine · Heart · Liver

Breaks up Blood stasis and invigorates the Blood

Menstrual disorders from Blood stasis, including painful or

absent periods with clots

Fixed abdominal masses from Blood stasis

Traumatic injury with bruising

Flank pain

Abdominal pain after childbirth

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

Dry-Intestine constipation, notably chronic cases in older

people, after childbirth or after a febrile illness, where Yin or

Blood is deficient

Drains abscesses

Lung or Intestinal abscess that has formed a fixed mass

Rhizoma Gastrodiae

Gastrodia Rhizome

Liver

Extinguishes Wind, calms the Liver and stops spasms and tremors

Internal Liver Wind arising from Heat or Cold, with headache,

dizziness, spasms and tremors

Childhood convulsions and epilepsy

Tonic-clonic spasms, opisthotonos and tetany

Wind-stroke

Subdues rising Liver Yang, extinguishes Wind and relieves pain

Headache and dizziness from rising Liver Yang

Wind-Phlegm with dizziness, headache or migraine

Wind-stroke with one-sided paralysis, dizziness and numb limbs

Suited to both Excess and Deficiency patterns

Disperses Wind-Damp, frees the channels and relieves Bi

Wind-Damp Bi with pain, heaviness and numbness of the

lower back and limbs

Radix Semiaquilegiae

muskroot-like semiaquilegia root

Spleen · Bladder · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, reduces swelling and disperses stagnation

Toxic sores, abscesses and swellings, including deep-rooted

boils (furuncles)

Some types of cancer

tian men dong

Bencao Index

tian zhu huang

Bencao Index

ting li zi

Bencao Index

tong cao

Bencao Index

Bambusae Concertio Silicea

Bamboo Sugar

Heart · Gallbladder · Liver

Clears and transforms Phlegm-Heat

Phlegm-Heat in the Lungs, with sputum that will not come up easily

Cough with chest pain

Clears Heat, cools the Heart and settles convulsions

Convulsions and spasms, loss of speech or loss of consciousness from Phlegm-Heat

Wind-stroke where Phlegm blocks the throat and rattles

Convulsions and spasms in children from Phlegm-Heat, sometimes with wheezing

Of the bamboo medicinals, the one classically chosen for children, as it is gentler on digestion than bamboo sap

Radix Asparagi

asparagus tuber

Lung · Kidney

Nourishes Kidney Yin, clears Lung Heat and drains

Deficiency Fire

Night sweats, a dry throat and mouth, and afternoon or low-grade fever from Kidney Yin deficiency

Wasting of the legs when Kidney Yin depletion leads to Jing deficiency

Lung Yin deficiency with Heat in the Upper Jiao and a dry mouth

Lung Dryness with a dry mouth and an unproductive cough, or scant sticky phlegm streaked with blood that is hard to expectorate

Chest pain and coughing up blood

Fever with an aversion to wind and cold

Moistens the Lungs, nourishes the Kidneys, generates Fluids and resolves Phlegm

Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder) of the upper, middle or lower Jiao, from Lung and Kidney Yin deficiency, with thirst and muscle wasting

Consumptive disease with a low fever in the afternoon

Dry stools and constipation when Fluids and Yin are depleted

Medulla Tetrapanacis

Rice Paper Plant Pith

Lung · Stomach

Promotes urination, drains Damp and clears Heat

Damp-Warm febrile disease

Painful urinary dysfunction from Damp-Heat

Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao with edema and scanty, dark or painful urination

Mild Lin patterns

Mostly given in a supporting role

Clears Heat through the Lungs and opens the water passages

Fluids failing to descend along the upper water pathway

Promotes lactation

Scanty or absent breast milk, classically combined with herbs that support Qi and Blood

Tingli Seed

Lung · Bladder

Drains the Lungs, expels Phlegm-fluid and calms wheezing

Wheezing or cough with copious phlegm rattling in the throat, from Phlegm accumulation or Lung Heat

Excess-type cough and breathlessness with thick, profuse phlegm, fullness of the chest and flanks, and being unable to lie flat

Promotes urination and reduces edema

Obstructed Qi of the Lungs and Bladder, with puffiness of the face and eyes, or fluid collecting in the chest or abdomen, and difficult urination

Generalised edema with scanty urine

tou gu cao

Bencao Index

tu bie chong

Bencao Index

tu fu ling

Bencao Index

tu niu xi

Bencao Index

Eupolyphaga
Ground Beetle
Spleen · Heart · Liver

Breaks up and expels Blood stasis, invigorates the Blood and disperses masses

- Absent periods from Blood stasis
- Fixed abdominal masses
- Abdominal pain after childbirth
- Swollen tongue from Blood stasis

Joins the sinews and knits bones

- Fractures, torn tendons and ligaments, cuts and bruises from traumatic injury
- Lumbar strain, taken as a toasted powder

Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Invigorates Blood, breaks up stasis, reduces swelling and generates flesh

- Bruising, swelling, inflammation and pain after external or traumatic injury

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, cools the Blood and relieves pain

- Burns, carbuncles, swellings and toxic sores, applied topically

Drains Damp-Heat

- Acute jaundice
- Hepatitis

Dispels Wind-Damp and relaxes the sinews and muscles

- Arthritis and joint pain
- Contracture of the muscles and bones
- Beriberi from Cold-Damp
- Tinea

Radix Achyranthis Terrena
Achyranthis Root
Kidney · Liver

Drains Fire and resolves toxicity

- Sore, swollen throat; its main use
- Diphtheria and pneumonia, for which the record says it was thought especially effective

Clears Heat toxin from the skin

- Abscesses and skin sores
- Snakebite, applied traditionally to ease its effects

Invigorates Blood

- Amenorrhea
- Dysmenorrhea

Rhizoma Smilacis Glabrae
glabrous greenbrier rhizome
Stomach · Liver

Resolves toxicity, eliminates Damp and benefits the joints

- Turbid, painful urination from Fire toxicity
- Jaundice from Damp-Heat
- Turbid discharge from Damp-Heat
- Lingering conditions of toxin and Damp
- Damp-Heat Bi with painful joints and sinews

Clears Damp-Heat from the skin

- Chuang Yong: recurrent ulcers and other hot skin lesions
- Damp-Heat eruptions and sores of the skin, acute or chronic and recurring

Promotes urination and clears Heat from the Lower Jiao

- Heat Lin: urination that burns and hurts

tu si zi

Bencao Index

wa leng zi

Bencao Index

wan nian qing

Bencao Index

wang bu liu xing

Bencao Index

Concha Arcae
arc shell
Lung · Spleen · Liver

Invigorates Blood, transforms Phlegm, resolves stagnation, softens hardness and dissipates nodules

- Fixed or moving masses in the abdomen, whether due to Phlegm, Qi stagnation or Blood stasis
- Scrofula and goiter
- Menstrual pain
- Chronic cough with Phlegm
- Enlarged liver and spleen

Neutralises acid and relieves pain

- Chronic pain of the Stomach, or pain of Blood stasis as from an ulcer, with vomiting and sour regurgitation; calcined for this use
- Acid reflux, and gastric or duodenal ulcers

Semen Cuscutae
Cuscuta
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies Kidney Yang and Yin, secures Jing and urine and benefits the marrow

- Impotence, seminal emission, premature ejaculation, frequent urination, vaginal discharge, tinnitus and a sore, painful back from Kidney Yang deficiency
- Frequent urination at night

Tonifies the Liver and Kidneys and brightens the eyes

- Liver and Kidney deficiency, whether of Yin, Yang or Jing, causing dizziness, ringing in the ears, blurred vision or spots in the visual field

Strengthens the Spleen and Kidneys and stops diarrhea

- Loose stools, diarrhea and poor appetite from Spleen and Kidney deficiency
- Daybreak diarrhea

Calms the fetus

- Threatened or habitual miscarriage, particularly from Kidney deficiency

Semen Vaccariae
cowherb seed
Stomach · Liver

Invigorates Blood, promotes lactation and unblocks the channels

- Absent, painful or irregular periods
- Insufficient breast milk
- Scanty milk together with absent periods
- Joint pain in Bi when Blood obstruction blocks the channels and collaterals

Reduces swelling and drains abscesses

- Swollen, painful testicles or breasts
- Breast abscess

Promotes healing of incised wounds

- Incised wounds

Radix et Rhizoma Rehdeae Japonicae
rehdea japonica roth
Lung

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, strengthens the Heart and promotes urination

- Sore, swollen throat
- Sores and boils
- Edema and abdominal distension
- Vomiting blood
- Snake and insect bites
- Heart failure
- Uterine bleeding, heavy or persistent
- Diphtheria

wei ling xian

Bencao Index

wu bei zi

Bencao Index

wu gong

Bencao Index

wu jia pi

Bencao Index

Galla Chinensis
Gallnut Of Chinese Sumac
Lung · Large Intestine · Kidney

Astringes the Lungs and stops cough
Long-standing cough from Lung Qi deficiency, often with thin or profuse sputum

Astringes the Intestines and stops diarrhea
Chronic diarrhea or dysentery
Blood in the stool of long standing
Rectal prolapse after prolonged loose stools

Astringes sweat and secures the Kidneys and Jing
Seminal emission and spermatorrhea when the Kidneys fail to hold
Spontaneous sweating, night sweats or excessive sweating

Clears Fire toxicity, dries Damp and reduces swelling (topical)
Applied as a powder or wash to sores, skin disease, toxic swellings and weeping, ulcerated skin
Scar tissue

Cools Deficiency Fire
Coughing of blood or blood-flecked phlegm over a long period, when Lung Yin is deficient and Deficiency Fire flares

Stops bleeding
Uterine bleeding, blood in the stool or urine, bleeding gums and nosebleed
Blood coughed up or vomited

Cortex Acanthopanax
acanthopanax root bark
Kidney · Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp, warms and nourishes the Liver and Kidneys, and strengthens sinews and bones
Long-standing Wind-Cold-Damp Bi on a base of Liver and Kidney deficiency, with soft or weak bones and sinews
Weak bones and sinews in older people or in children whose development is delayed
Muscle spasm, cramps and pain from Wind-Damp, whether Excess or deficient
Sore, weak lower back and knees

Transforms Damp and reduces swelling
Edema and difficult urination
Cold-Damp Leg Qi

Radix Clematidis
Chinese clematis root
Bladder

Dispels Wind-Damp, unblocks the channels and relieves pain
Wind-Damp Bi with joint pain, aching muscles, numbness and stiffness, especially in the lower back and legs
Bi affecting the whole body
Stubborn Bi obstructing Qi and Blood
Pain from obstruction of the channels

Softens and dissolves fish bones
A fish bone stuck in the throat (a traditional use)

Reduces Phlegm and water accumulation and regulates urination
Fullness and accumulation in the Middle Jiao
Digestive complaints from Cold Phlegm

Scolopendra
Centipede
Liver

Extinguishes Wind and stops spasms and convulsions
Seizures, lockjaw, opisthotonos and acute or chronic childhood convulsions from Liver Wind
Tetanus with rigidity
Epilepsy
Facial paralysis from Wind
Wind-stroke with a deviated eye and mouth, or hemiplegia

Attacks Fire toxin, dissipates nodules and relieves masses
Toxic nodules such as sores, scrofula, carbuncles and lumps in the neck; Chuang Yong treated topically
Sores that will not heal, applied topically
Cancer
Snake bites

Unblocks the collaterals and stops pain
Obstinate headaches, including migraine
Stubborn Wind-Damp Bi pain that has not responded to gentler herbs

wu ling zhi

Bencao Index

wu mei

Bencao Index

wu shao she

Bencao Index

wu wei zi

Bencao Index

Fructus Mume

Mume Fruit

Lung · Large Intestine · Spleen · Liver

Astringes Lung Qi, restrains sweating and stops cough

Chronic cough when deficient Lungs let Qi leak out

Difficulty swallowing and regurgitation

Generates Fluids and relieves thirst

Thirst from Deficiency Heat

Qi and Yin deficiency

Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder) from Deficiency Heat

Dryness and thirst when Fluids are depleted

Calms and expels roundworms and relieves pain

Abdominal pain and vomiting caused by roundworms

At times, abdominal pain and vomiting without parasites

Astringes the Intestines and stops diarrhea

Chronic, unremitting diarrhea or dysentery, faecal

incontinence and blood in the stool; the charred herb may be

used on its own

Rectal prolapse

Stops bleeding

Blood in the stool or heavy uterine bleeding, with signs of

Blood deficiency: a parched mouth, thirst and dryness

Bleeding from the vagina, anus or urethra, treated with the

charred, powdered herb alone

Treats corns and warts topically

Corns and warts

Faeces Troglodytorum

excrementum pteropi

Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis and relieves pain

Blood stasis with absent or painful periods

Abdominal pain after childbirth with retained lochia

Fixed, stabbing pain of the epigastrium or abdomen from

congealed Blood

Sharp, fixed pain of the chest or flanks, combined with other

Blood-moving herbs

Transforms stasis and stops bleeding

Uterine bleeding, or lochia that is retained or lingers, from

Blood stasis with clots and pain

Treats childhood nutritional impairment

Childhood nutritional impairment with localised distension

Resolves toxicity

Snake and insect bites, taken internally or applied topically

Fructus Schisandrae

Chinese magnolivine fruit

Lung · Heart · Kidney

Astringes Lung Qi and stops cough

Long-standing cough and wheezing when Lung Qi, or both

Lungs and Kidneys, are deficient

Tonifies the Kidneys, secures Jing and stops diarrhea and spermatorrhea

Seminal emission, spermatorrhea, vaginal discharge and

frequent urination from Kidney deficiency

Daybreak diarrhea from Spleen and Kidney deficiency

Astringes sweat and generates Fluids

Heavy sweating, above all with thirst or a dry throat

Spontaneous sweating and night sweats

Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder), in combination with

other herbs

Calms the Spirit and holds in Heart Qi

Irritability, palpitations, insomnia and dream-disturbed sleep

from deficient Blood and Yin of the Heart and Kidneys

Heart and Kidney disharmony

Tonifies Qi

Deficient Qi of the Heart and Spleen

Zaocys

black-tail snake

Spleen · Liver

Strongly unblocks the channels and collaterals and extinguishes Wind

Long-standing, stubborn Wind-Damp Bi with numb, weak

limbs and cramping sinews

Deep, obstinate Bi, beyond the reach of milder herbs, with

stiff, painful joints, numbness and limited movement

Dispels Wind from the skin

Tinea, skin disease, numbness of the skin and rashes

Chronic itching and hives

Dispels Wind from the sinews, strengthens sinews and bones, and stops spasms and convulsions

Spasms, tremors or seizures

Convulsions and tetanic spasm from internal Wind

After Wind-stroke: facial paralysis, muscle paralysis and

hemiplegia

wu yao

Bencao Index

wu yi

Bencao Index

wu zhu yu

Bencao Index

xi gua pi

Bencao Index

Fructus Ulmi Macrocarpae
Elm Cake
Stomach · Spleen

Kills parasites

- Roundworms, pinworms and tapeworms
- Acute roundworm symptoms, taken alone as a powder
- Abdominal pain and accumulation from parasites

Reduces accumulation and disperses food stagnation

- Childhood nutritional impairment
- Children with wasting, poor appetite and malnutrition linked to parasites

Dries Damp

- Damp-type digestive complaints, alongside other herbs

Treats tinea topically

- Tinea and scabies, applied externally

Radix Linderae
combined spicebush root
Lung · Spleen · Bladder · Kidney

Moves Qi and relieves pain

- Cold with Qi stagnation: a stifling feeling in the chest, and pain of the flanks, epigastrium and abdomen
- Abdominal distension
- Bulging (hernial) disorders
- Menstrual pain

Warms the Kidneys and disperses Cold

- Frequent urination or incontinence from Kidney Yang deficiency or Deficiency Cold of the Bladder
- Accompanying signs: a lower back that is sore, cold and weak, a pale complexion, tiredness, seminal emission and copious clear vaginal discharge

Stomach · Heart · Bladder

Clears Summerheat and generates Fluids

- Summerheat with marked thirst, scanty dark urine and dry retching

Promotes urination and clears jaundice

- Hepatitis with jaundice

Cools Heat in the Lungs and Stomach

- Lung and Stomach Heat

Fructus Evodiae
Evodia Fruit
Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Warms the Middle Jiao, disperses Cold, moves Liver Qi and relieves pain

- Stomach or Liver channel invaded by Cold or Phlegm, with vertex headache, nausea and epigastric pain, drooling, loss of taste, a pale tongue, and a pulse that is wiry or weak
- Cold bulging disorders along the course of the Liver channel
- Painful periods
- Flank pain
- Liver and Stomach disharmony

Spreads Liver Qi, directs rebellious Qi downward and stops vomiting

- Vomiting and sour regurgitation, adaptable to Hot or Cold patterns by its combining herbs
- Nausea and vomiting from Liver and Stomach disharmony

Warms the Spleen and Kidneys, stops diarrhea and expels Damp-Cold

- Daybreak diarrhea from Yang deficiency of the Spleen and Kidneys
- Damp-Cold Leg Qi

Leads Fire downward

- Sores of the mouth and tongue, with the powder mixed into vinegar and applied to the soles of the feet

xi he liu

Bencao Index

xi jiao

Bencao Index

xi xian cao

Bencao Index

xi xin

Bencao Index

Stomach · Heart · Liver

Clears Heat from the Ying and Xue levels, resolves Fire toxicity, cools the Blood, clears blotches and stops bleeding

Blood Heat at the Ying or Xue level, with extreme fever and Blood driven out of its vessels: skin rashes and purpura, nosebleed, vomiting blood, convulsions and delirium
Maculopapular rashes, purpura and erysipelas from Heat toxin

Clears the Heart and calms the Shen

Shen disturbance
Late-stage febrile disease with a crimson tongue and clouded consciousness

Clears Heat and extinguishes Liver Wind

Warm-Heat disease that has reached the Ying or Xue level, with unremitting high fever, unconsciousness, delirium, convulsions or manic behaviour
Tremor and convulsions when extreme Heat enters the deeper levels

Herba Asari

Asarum
Lung · Heart · Kidney

Releases the Exterior and disperses Wind-Cold

Exterior Wind-Cold as a supporting herb, especially with Damp in the Lungs, internal Cold-Damp or underlying Kidney Yang deficiency
Wind-Cold where aching of the head and body dominates

Disperses Wind-Cold and internal Cold and relieves pain

Pain from Wind or Cold in any part of the body, notably headache, Bi and abdominal pain
Headache when Cold obstructs Fluids and Blood, often without sweating
Bi pain from Wind, Cold and Damp
Cold-type body aches

Warms the Lungs and transforms Phlegm and thin fluids

Rebellious Qi with a full chest and incessant coughing of copious, watery phlegm
Qi knotted in the chest and diaphragm, with retained fluids from Wind-Cold or Phlegm-Damp
Wheezing with copious clear phlegm

Warms the channels and dispels Cold from the vessels

Numbness and pain of the limbs from Cold
Cold-type abdominal accumulation, combined with purgatives

Opens the nasal passages and clears the orifices of the head

Nasal congestion
Disorders of the mouth
Loss of consciousness

Promotes healing of mouth ulcers

Sores or ulcers of the mouth

Relieves toothache

Toothache

Cacumen Tamaricis

Chinese tamarisk twig and leaves
Lung · Stomach · Heart

Induces sweating and vents rashes

Measles in which the rash has not fully come out
Smallpox
Itching from various rashes caused by Wind

Herba Siegesbeckiae

Siegesbeckia
Kidney · Liver

Dispels Wind-Damp, strengthens the sinews and unblocks the channels and collaterals

Wind-Damp Bi with painful joints
Bi with pain, numbness, spasm or paralysis of the joints, trunk and limbs
Spasms, numbness and cramps of the limbs, and weak legs
Sequelae of Wind-stroke: numb, weak back and legs, facial paralysis and hemiplegia

Clears Heat and calms the Liver

Headache and dizziness from rising Liver Yang

Clears and transforms Damp-Heat, resolves toxicity and stops itching

Itching sores from Damp-Heat
Rashes from Wind-Damp, and other kinds of itching

Treats hypertension

Hypertension

Calms the Spirit

Poor sleep, irritability, forgetfulness, vertigo and ringing in the ears

xi yang shen

Bencao Index

xia ku cao

Bencao Index

xian he cao

Bencao Index

xian mao

Bencao Index

Spica Prunellae
common self-heal fruit-spike
Gallbladder · Liver

Clears Liver Fire and brightens the eyes

Liver Fire flaring upward: red, swollen or painful eyes, excess tearing, double vision, headache and dizziness
Eye pain that worsens in the evening or with fatigue, from Liver Yin or Blood deficiency, where the eyes are tender and sensitive to light but not red or swollen; combined with Blood-nourishing herbs

Clears Phlegm-Fire and dissipates nodules

Phlegm-Fire lumps of the neck: scrofula, goiter and thyroid nodules, swollen or enlarged lymph glands, lipoma and carbuncle
Breast lumps and mastitis

Treats hypertension

High blood pressure from Liver Fire or rising Liver Yang, with headache and dizziness

Radix Panacis Quinquefolii
American ginseng
Lung · Heart · Kidney

Tonifies Qi, generates Fluids, nourishes the Stomach and nourishes Yin

Deficient Qi, Yin and Body Fluids with Heat signs and a chronic fever that does not abate
Weakness, irritability, thirst and a lingering low fever after febrile disease

Tonifies Lung Yin and clears Fire from the Lungs

Lung Qi and Yin both deficient, Fluids depleted and Deficiency Fire flaring so that the Lungs cannot clear and disperse: long-standing wheezing and blood-streaked sputum
Lung Yin deficiency with cough, dry cough, hoarseness or loss of voice, and coughing up blood
Thirst with a dry mouth and tongue from Yin deficiency

Clears Heat from the Intestines and stops bleeding

Blood in the stool from Intestinal Heat due to Yin deficiency

Rhizoma Curculiginis
common curculigo rhizome
Kidney

Tonifies the Kidneys and strengthens Yang

Kidney Yang deficiency with impotence, frequent or uncontrolled urination, seminal emission and irregular periods
Infertility from a Cold womb in women, or Cold, watery Jing in men
Weakened Ming Men Fire

Expels Cold and Damp and strengthens the sinews and bones

Stubborn Cold-Damp Bi with pain throughout the body, sinews and bones that feel weak, and pain of the lower back and knees
Yang deficiency of the Spleen and Kidneys

Warms the interior and disperses Cold

Cold pain of the abdomen or lower back

Herba Agrimoniae
Agrimony
Lung · Spleen · Liver

Astringes and stops bleeding

Bleeding of many kinds: vomiting or coughing blood, nosebleed, bleeding gums, blood in the urine or stool, and uterine bleeding
Bleeding from Heat or Cold, Excess or deficiency, when combined with suitable herbs

Astringes the Intestines and stops diarrhea and dysentery

Chronic diarrhea and dysentery

Kills parasites

Trichomonas vaginitis, applied topically
Tapeworm and malarial disorders, taken internally

Tonifies Qi and Blood

Qi and Blood deficiency from overwork
Chronic fatigue with low energy from Spleen Qi deficiency

Reduces swelling and expels pus

Breast abscess, swellings and ulcers, treated internally or topically with the vine

xiang fu

Bencao Index

xiang jia pi

Bencao Index

xiang ru

Bencao Index

xiang yuan

Bencao Index

Cortex Periplocae
Chinese silkvine root-bark
Heart · Kidney · Liver

Expels Wind and Damp, warms the channels to relieve pain, and strengthens the sinews and bones

Rheumatic arthritis with a sore, weak lower back and knees, together with palpitations, breathlessness and swollen lower limbs

Promotes urination and reduces edema

Edema with difficult urination

Rhizoma Cyperi
Cyperus
San Jiao · Gallbladder · Liver

Spreads and regulates Liver Qi

Liver Qi stagnation with pain under the ribs and distension of the epigastrium and abdomen

Frustration, mood swings, frequent sighing, a congested chest and poor appetite from Liver Qi stagnation

Liver and Spleen disharmony

Regulates menstruation and relieves pain

Painful or irregular periods and other gynaecological disorders arising from Liver Qi stagnation

Breast distension

Fructus Citri
Citron
Lung · Spleen · Liver

Transforms Phlegm and stops cough

Cough with copious phlegm

Moves Qi, awakens the Spleen and harmonises the Middle Jiao

Qi stagnation of the Liver, Spleen and Stomach with epigastric distension and pain

Soothes and regulates Liver Qi and stops pain

Distension and pain of the chest and flanks from Liver Qi stagnation

Descends and drains to reduce Phlegm and stop cough

Copious phlegm with coughing and a stifling feeling in the chest

Herba Moslae
aromatic madder
Lung · Stomach

Induces sweating, releases the Exterior, clears Summerheat, transforms Damp and harmonises the Spleen and Stomach

Summer-season Wind-Cold, especially with Damp: chills, fever, headache, no sweating, body aches, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting

Summerheat or Damp contracted from outside

Abdominal fullness and diarrhea accompanying this summer pattern

Promotes urination and reduces swelling

Edema and difficult urination, above all when an Exterior condition is also present

xiao hui xiang

Bencao Index

xiao ji

Bencao Index

xie bai

Bencao Index

xin yi

Bencao Index

Herba Cirsii
field thistle
Heart · Liver

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Bleeding of any kind from Blood Heat, including blood in the urine or stool, coughing or vomiting blood, nosebleed and uterine bleeding

Disperses Blood stasis, resolves toxicity, and reduces swelling and abscesses

Heat-toxin sores, boils and abscesses, used internally, or externally as a poultice of the crushed fresh herb or its juice

Clears Damp-Heat and promotes urination

Jaundice from Damp-Heat, and hepatitis
Painful urination and bleeding from the urinary tract

Benefits the Gallbladder and lowers blood pressure

Hypertension

Fructus Foeniculi
fennel
Stomach · Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Warms the Liver and Kidneys, disperses Cold and relieves pain

Lower abdominal pain from Cold in the Lower Jiao
Cold bulging (hernial) disorders when Cold invades the Liver channel
Testicular pain and swelling
Painful periods from Cold

Regulates Qi and harmonises the Stomach

Vomiting, nausea, sluggish digestion and little appetite, with abdominal or epigastric pain, from a Cold Stomach

Flos Magnoliae
Magnolia Flower
Lung · Stomach

Expels Wind-Cold and opens the nasal passages

Wind-Cold with nasal blockage, congestion, pain or discharge, loss of smell, sinus problems and sinus headache
A Wind-Cold cold in its first days, when the nose is affected
Any nasal or sinus condition, combined with suitable herbs

Bulbus Allii Macrostemis
Chinese Garlic
Lung · Large Intestine · Stomach

Unblocks Yang Qi, disperses turbid and Cold Phlegm, relieves pain and disperses hardenings

Chest Bi from Damp-Cold, where Cold, turbid Phlegm blocks the flow of Yang Qi, with chest pain spreading to the flank or upper back, a tight, stifling chest, shortness of breath, coughing and wheezing
Angina-type chest pain

Descends Qi, relieves stagnation and stops diarrhea

Dysentery and tenesmus from Damp stagnation in the Large Intestine
Diarrhea with straining and a sense of incomplete emptying, from Qi stuck in the Intestines

xing ren

Bencao Index

xiong dan

Bencao Index

xiong huang

Bencao Index

xu chang qing

Bencao Index

Fel Ursi
bear gallbladder
Heart · Gallbladder · Liver

- Clears Heat from the Heart and Liver and stops spasms**
Childhood convulsions, epilepsy and eclampsia when Liver Fire generates Wind
Wind generated by Excess Heat
Heat at the Ying level
Gallbladder Fire
Delirium with extensive burns
Jaundice
High fever with convulsions
Epidemic fever and Summerheat

- Clears Heat and resolves Fire toxicity**
Hot, toxic lesions such as sores, carbuncles, burning hemorrhoids and sore throat; applied topically it is especially good at relieving pain
Toothache

- Clears Liver Heat and benefits the eyes**
Severe red, painful eyes, including acute conjunctivitis with swelling
Mild visual obstruction
Used both topically and internally

- Reduces swelling**
Hemorrhoids, sprains, fractures and other injuries

- Clears Heat, kills parasites and treats childhood nutritional impairment**
Childhood nutritional impairment, mainly with Heat
Tapeworm

Radix Cynanchi Paniculati
Paniculate Cynanchum
Stomach · Liver

- Dispels Wind-Damp, invigorates Blood and relieves pain**
Wind-Damp Bi
Pain from traumatic injury
Abdominal pain from Deficiency Cold

- Resolves toxicity and stops itching**
Wind rashes, treated internally or topically
Toxic sores (Chuang Yong)
Itchy skin, including eczema, and snakebite; it can be used on its own

Semen Armeniacae Amarum
apricot kernel
Lung · Large Intestine

- Stops cough and calms wheezing**
Cough from Heat or Cold, depending on the herbs it is combined with
Wind-Dryness cough, for which it is especially useful
Cough and wheezing of many kinds, including Wind-Cold, Wind-Heat and externally contracted Dry Heat

- Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels**
Constipation when the Intestines are dry or deficient

Large Intestine · Stomach · Liver

- Resolves toxicity and kills parasites (topical)**
Scabies, ringworm, and Damp or Damp-Heat rashes, applied topically
Itching skin of any kind, applied topically
Abscesses, suppurating or ulcerated lesions, and insect or snake bites, applied topically

- Kills intestinal parasites**
Parasites in the intestines, above all with signs of accumulation
Roundworms in particular

- Dries Damp, expels Phlegm, stops malarial disorders and settles Wind**
Wheezing
Seizures
Malarial disorders

xu duan

Bencao Index

xuan fu hua

Bencao Index

xuan shen

Bencao Index

xue jie

Bencao Index

Flos Inulae
Inula Flower
Lung · Stomach · Spleen · Liver

Expels Phlegm and moves retained water
Phlegm accumulating in the Lungs with rebellious Qi
Phlegm and thin fluids collecting in the chest: cough or wheezing with abundant white or yellow sputum and fullness of the chest and diaphragm
Mainly for Cold patterns, though usable for Hot patterns with suitable herbs
Phlegm-Damp

Descends Qi and stops vomiting
Vomiting, hiccups and belching
Nausea and acid reflux from rebellious Stomach Qi with Phlegm

Directs Lung Qi downward and calms wheezing
Cough driven by rising Qi rather than by dryness

Softens hardness below the ribs
Localised distension and hardness under the ribs from Phlegm and stagnant Qi

Radix Dipsaci
Dipsacus
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies the Liver and Kidneys and strengthens the sinews and bones
Sore, aching lower back and knees, stiff joints and weak legs from Liver and Kidney deficiency
Wind-Damp on top of underlying Kidney deficiency
Dribbling urination from Kidney deficiency

Stops uterine bleeding, calms the fetus and prevents miscarriage
Bleeding or spotting in pregnancy
Restless fetus
Threatened miscarriage, including from Liver and Kidney deficiency
Uterine bleeding and vaginal discharge from deficiency of the Ren channel

Moves Blood, relieves pain, generates flesh and joins the sinews and bones
Traumatic injury such as fractures, sprains and bruises, especially with pain and swelling of the lower back and limbs, treated topically or internally
Sores on the surface of the body, treated topically
Bi pain

Reduces swellings, abscesses and sores
Toxic abscesses and sores

Resina Daemonoropis
Dragon'S Blood
Heart · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis and relieves pain
Pain from Blood stasis, particularly after injuries such as falls, fractures, bruising and sprains
Swelling, bruising and fixed pain from traumatic injury
Absent or painful periods
After childbirth, a congested chest and difficult breathing

Stops bleeding
Bleeding from external injury, applied topically
Taken internally for bleeding from the upper gut

Protects the ulcer surface, prevents decay and generates flesh
Long-standing ulcers and sores that fail to heal, and cancers
Open, suppurating sores
Painful, swollen hemorrhoids

Radix Scrophulariae
figwort root
Lung · Stomach · Kidney

Clears Heat and cools the Blood
Heat at the Xue level, or Blood Heat with bleeding such as vomiting blood, fever, a dry mouth and a purple or red-purple tongue

Nourishes Yin
After a Warm febrile disease, Heat from depleted Yin with dry Lungs, poor sleep, constipation, irritability and a clouded Shen
Dry cough from dry Lungs with Yin deficiency
Heart Yin deficiency

Softens hardness, dissipates nodules and transforms Phlegm-Heat
Lumps in the neck from Phlegm-Fire, such as goiter and scrofula, and swollen tonsils
A throat that is badly swollen and painful

Drains Fire
Extreme sore throat, or red, swollen eyes

Relieves toxicity
Heat at the Ying level

xue yu tan

Bencao Index

xun gu feng

Bencao Index

ya dan zi

Bencao Index

ya zhi cao

Bencao Index

Herba Aristolochiae Mollissimae
aristolochia mollissima
Liver

- Dispels Wind-Damp, unblocks the channels and collaterals and relieves pain**
Wind-Damp Bi with numb limbs, stiff joints that are hard to move, and paralysis
Pain in general, including digestive pain and pain from injury
Toothache
Malaria
Abscess

Heart · Kidney · Liver

- Astringes and stops bleeding without leaving stasis**
Bleeding of many kinds, notably nosebleed and uterine bleeding, as well as blood in the urine or stool, bleeding gums, and coughing or vomiting blood

- Tonifies Yin and promotes urination**
Blood Lin
Painful urinary dysfunction and blood in the urine, as a supporting herb

- Eliminates Blood stasis**
Blood stasis

- Generates flesh and heals sores**
Ulcerated sores or burns, applied topically
Dusted as a powder onto bleeding gums, into the nostril for nosebleed, or onto slow-healing sores and minor burns

Herba Commelinae
common dayflower
Lung · Stomach · Small Intestine

- Clears Heat, drains Fire, and mildly resolves toxicity and cools the Blood**
Fever from a fairly superficial Warm pathogen
Fever and sore throat with the common cold
Persistent fever in Warm pathogen disease
Leukorrhea
Sores and boils
Uterine bleeding
Hepatitis with jaundice
Erysipelas
Barbiers
Mumps (parotitis)
Nosebleed
Dysentery

- Clears Heat, promotes urination and relieves painful urinary dysfunction**
Hot, painful urination with edema, and blood in the urine
Edema with little urine
Acute rheumatoid arthritis
Scanty urine (uropenia)

Fructus Bruceae
Brucea Fruit
Large Intestine · Liver

- Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, dries Damp, cools the Blood and kills parasites**
Chronic dysentery that comes and goes
Dysentery with blood and mucus and rectal tenesmus
Dysentery from amoebae or other protozoa
Long-standing diarrhea, with stools alternating hard and loose, and hemorrhoids

- Treats malaria and Shao Yang disorders**
Malaria
Alternating chills and fever

- Treats cancer from Heat toxin**
Cancers of the colon, rectum, breast, esophagus, stomach, skin and cervix

- Softens hardness (topical)**
Hard nodules, warts, corns and cysts, applied topically
Trichomonas vaginitis, applied externally

yan hu suo

Bencao Index

yang qi shi

Bencao Index

yang ti

Bencao Index

ye jiao teng

Bencao Index

Actinolitum
Actinolite
Kidney

Warms the Kidneys and Lower Jiao, warms the Ming Men and strengthens Yang

Cold from deficient Kidney Yang: impotence, spermatorrhea or premature ejaculation, with a sore, weak lower back and knees
Low libido from Kidney Yang deficiency
Loose stools and cold limbs as part of the wider Kidney Yang deficiency picture

Warms the Uterus

Infertility and uterine bleeding when the Uterus is Cold
Gynecological complaints of a Cold type

Rhizoma Corydalis
Corydalis Rhizome
Stomach · Heart · Liver

Invigorates Blood, moves Qi and relieves pain

Pain anywhere in the body, whether of the chest, abdomen or limbs, from Qi or Blood stagnation or from injury
Chest and rib-side pain, epigastric and abdominal pain, and hernial pain from stagnant Qi and Blood
Especially valued for epigastric pain and painful periods

Invigorates Blood and regulates menstruation

Painful or irregular periods from Blood stasis

Induces and prolongs sleep

Insomnia

Caulis Polygoni Multiflori
caulis polygoni multiflori
Heart · Liver

Nourishes Heart Blood and Yin and calms the Spirit

Insomnia and irritability from deficient Heart Yin or Heart Blood
Restless sleep full of dreams, for which it is especially suited
Palpitations from Blood or Yin deficiency

Nourishes Blood and the sinews, unblocks the channels and dispels Wind-Damp

Aches, soreness, numbness and general weakness of the body when Blood is deficient
Aching back and limbs from Wind-Damp Bi

Dispels Wind and stops itching (external)

Used as an external wash for itching, rashes and hives when Wind combines with deficient Blood

Astringes sweating

Excessive or spontaneous sweating from deficiency

Radix Rumicis Japonici
Japanese dock root
Large Intestine · Heart · San Jiao · Liver

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity

Hair loss (alopecia)
Toxic swellings
Sore throat
Ulceration

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Bleeding (hemorrhage)
Hemorrhoids
Purpura

Promotes urination

Jaundice
Edema

Relieves constipation

Constipation

Kills parasites

Scabies

ye ju hua

Bencao Index

ye ming sha

Bencao Index

yi mu cao

Bencao Index

yi tang

Bencao Index

Faeces Vespertilionis
Bat Feces
Liver

Clears Liver Heat and brightens the eyes

- Night blindness
- Superficial visual obstruction, nebula and cataract
- Glaucoma
- Red eyes or bleeding under the conjunctiva from Liver Heat, where it is especially useful

Disperses Blood stasis and bruising and reduces accumulations

- Traumatic injury
- Scrofula
- Malaria

Treats childhood nutritional impairment

- Malnutrition and accumulation from childhood nutritional impairment (Gan Ji)
- Children who fail to thrive with long-term undernourishment, often linked to intestinal parasites

Flos Chrysanthemi Indici
Wild Chrysanthemum Flower
Lung · Liver

Drains Fire and resolves toxicity

- Sore, swollen throat from Fire toxin
- Furuncles, deep-rooted boils, carbuncles and other sores (Chuang Yong)
- Scrofula and goiter
- Eczema and itching, taken internally or applied as an external wash or poultice

Clears Liver Heat and Wind-Fire

- Red eyes and blurred vision from Liver Wind with Fire
- Red, painful eyes and headache from Liver Heat rising

Maltosum
cerealose
Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Strengthens the Spleen and tonifies Qi

- Spleen damaged by overwork, with shortness of breath and poor appetite
- Qi deficiency of the Spleen and Stomach with fatigue and weakness

Warms and tonifies the Middle Jiao and relieves spasmodic pain

- Deficiency Cold in the Middle Jiao: saliva in excess, a pale tongue with white coating, and a deep, slow pulse
- Intermittent cramping pain in the epigastrium or abdomen that eases with warmth and pressure

Moistens the Lungs and stops cough

- Deficient Lung Qi with a dry cough bringing up nothing, slow laboured breathing and a weak voice
- Dry cough from Lung dryness

Generates Fluids

- Thirst and dryness from deficiency

Coats swallowed objects

- A fish bone or other object lodged in the throat

Herba Leonuri
Leonurus
Heart · Bladder · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis, regulates menstruation and reduces masses

- Irregular periods from Blood stasis, with abdominal pain before the period
- Abdominal pain after childbirth with retained lochia
- Amenorrhea, or heavy periods with clots
- Fixed abdominal masses and infertility from Blood stasis on a base of Blood deficiency
- Pain from traumatic injury

Promotes urination and reduces swelling and edema

- Acute generalised edema, particularly with blood in the urine
- Edema together with Blood stasis
- Scanty or painful urination
- Chronic edema from nephritis, with heaviness, distension and fatigue
- Kidney stones

Clears Heat and resolves toxicity, internally or topically

- Toxic swellings, sores and abscesses
- Itchy rashes from Damp-Heat lodged in the muscles and skin
- Eczema, skin lesions and ulcers

yi yi ren

Bencao Index

yi zhi huang hua

Bencao Index

yi zhi ren

Bencao Index

yin chai hu

Bencao Index

Herba Solidaginis
solidago decurens
Lung · Kidney · Gallbladder · Liver

Relieves pain, reduces inflammation and opens the channels and collaterals

- Pain and inflammation
- Traumatic injury

Reduces swelling and resolves toxicity

- Toxic swellings
- Sore throat
- Jaundice
- Headache from Cold
- Whooping cough
- Convulsions in infants
- Fungal infections affecting the hands
- Carbuncles and swellings on the back
- Athlete's foot, applied topically

Semen Coicis
coix seed
Lung · Stomach · Spleen · Kidney

Strengthens the Spleen and drains Damp

- Damp stagnation
- Spleen deficiency with Damp, causing diarrhea, leg Qi and painful dribbling urination
- Edema and difficult urination
- Damp-Warm disease, treating both root and branch
- Leg Qi from Damp-Heat

Expels Wind-Damp and relieves pain

- Wind-Damp Bi with stiff muscles, swollen joints, severe joint pain and limited movement; in chronic cases it eases spasm and frees the joints

Clears Heat and expels pus

- Soft carbuncles that have come to pus
- Lung abscess and intestinal abscess

Clears Damp-Heat

- Damp-Heat at whatever level it lies, marked by a greasy white coat on the tongue and poor digestion

Radix Stellariae
starwort root
Stomach · Liver

Clears Deficiency Heat

- Fever of any kind from Yin deficiency, including steaming bone disorder with Yin-deficient Fire
- Tidal or afternoon fever, low-grade fever and night sweats
- Heat that lingers in the late stage of a febrile disease

Clears Heat from childhood nutritional impairment

- Childhood nutritional impairment (Gan Ji) where accumulation has generated Heat, with fever, thirst, irritability and wasting

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

- Bleeding driven by Heat in the Blood, such as nosebleed, coughing blood, uterine bleeding or blood in the urine
- Bleeding hemorrhoids

Fructus Alpiniae Oxyphyllae
Alpinia Fruit
Spleen · Kidney

Warms the Kidneys and secures Jing and urine

- Kidney Yang deficiency with frequent, copious or dribbling urination, incontinence or bedwetting, and spermatorrhea or seminal emission
- Kidney Jing that is not held securely
- Irregular uterine bleeding

Warms the Spleen, improves appetite, stops diarrhea and restrains saliva

- Deficient Spleen and Stomach Yang with diarrhea, abdominal pain that feels cold, copious saliva and an unpleasant, thick taste in the mouth
- Cold invading the Spleen and Kidneys, with abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhea
- Deficiency Cold of the Middle Jiao with poor appetite and chronic watery diarrhea
- Profuse thin, clear saliva or drooling when Cold in the Spleen fails to hold in the fluids

yin chen

Bencao Index

yin yang huo

Bencao Index

ying su qiao

Bencao Index

yu jin

Bencao Index

Herba Epimedii

aerial part of epimedium
Kidney · Liver

Tonifies the Kidneys, strengthens Yang and raises libido

Deficient Kidney Yang with impotence, infertility, frequent urination, forgetfulness and withdrawal, and a cold, painful lower back and knees
Low sex drive and spermatorrhea

Strengthens the sinews and bones

Kidney deficiency showing as a sore, weakened lower back and knees

Dispels Wind-Cold-Damp and warms and unblocks Yang Qi

Wind-Cold-Damp Bi with joint pain, spasm or cramping of the hands and feet, and numb limbs
Numbness or tingling in the arms and fingers
Contracture, numbness or hemiplegia after Wind-Stroke

Herba Artemisiae Scopariae

Vigate Wormwood
Stomach · Spleen · Gallbladder · Liver

Clears Damp-Heat from the Liver and Gallbladder and resolves jaundice

Yang-type jaundice from Damp-Heat
Jaundice from Damp-Cold (Yin type, dull and lustreless), in combination with warming herbs

Clears Heat and resolves Damp in the skin

Skin disease of the lower body from Damp-Heat, including Damp sores, Wind rashes, eczema, weeping lesions and urticaria; can be used alone as a wash

Clears and releases Damp from the Exterior

Damp-Warm febrile disease with fever, body aches, a stifling feeling in the chest, abdominal distension, constipation and dark urine

Promotes urination (a mild effect)

Curcumae Radixuma

Curcuma Tuber
Lung · Heart · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis, moves Qi, relieves pain and speeds the healing of chronic sores

Blood stasis from trauma, used internally and topically
Chronic sores
Stagnant Liver Qi with pain in the chest, flanks or abdomen, or painful periods
Liver Qi stagnation with Heat signs, for which it is especially suited
Irregular periods and distending abdominal masses from stagnant Qi and Blood
Constrained Liver Qi affecting the Stomach
Enlarged liver and spleen of the kind seen in cirrhosis

Clears Heat and cools the Blood

Heat at the Blood (Xue) level with nosebleed, vomiting of blood or blood in the urine
Nosebleed at the start of the period (inverted menstruation), where it is especially useful
Early periods or blood-streaked menses when Heat forces Blood out of the vessels

Clears the Heart and Pericardium and opens the orifices

Phlegm-Heat or Damp-Heat clouding the Heart orifices, with anxiety, agitation, disorientation, seizures or manic behavior

Benefits the Gallbladder and resolves jaundice

Gallbladder disorders, including gallstones
Jaundice, including jaundice from Damp-Heat

Pericarpium Papaveris

poppy husk
Lung · Large Intestine · Kidney

Restrains leakage of Lung Qi

Chronic cough
Long-standing cough or wheezing with no Exterior or Excess pattern present

Astringes the Intestines

Diarrhea or dysentery that has become chronic and depleting

Stabilises the Lower Jiao

Deficiency of the Lower Jiao with excessive urination, spermatorrhea or vaginal discharge

Relieves pain

Pain of any kind, particularly of the sinews and bones, the epigastrium or the abdomen
Pain from tumors

yu li ren

Bencao Index

yu liang shi

Bencao Index

yu mi xu

Bencao Index

yu xing cao

Bencao Index

Astringes the Intestines and stops diarrhea

- Long-standing, persistent diarrhea or dysentery
- Prolapse of the rectum after prolonged loose stools

Astringes and stops bleeding

- Chronic uterine bleeding of a deficient type

Stops vaginal discharge

- Long-standing leukorrhea from instability of the Lower Jiao

Semen Pruni

Bush Cherri Pit

Large Intestine · Spleen · Small Intestine

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

- Constipation from stagnant Qi in the Intestines, including dry stools with abdominal distension; unlike other moist laxatives it also moves Qi

Promotes urination and reduces edema

- Edema where urination is difficult and the bowels are constipated
- Leg Qi

Herba Houttuyniae

heartleaf houttuynia

Lung · Large Intestine

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, reduces swelling and abscesses and expels pus, acting mainly on the Lungs

- Lung abscess, or cough from Lung Heat bringing up thick yellow or green sputum
- Pneumonia and acute or chronic bronchitis
- Sores, boils and carbuncles from Fire toxin (Chuang Yong), taken internally or applied topically

Drains Damp-Heat and promotes urination

- Painful urinary dysfunction from Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao
- Diarrhea or dysentery from Damp-Heat in the Large Intestine
- Enteritis and colitis-type conditions

Stigma Maydis

Cornsilk

Bladder · Gallbladder · Liver

Promotes urination, reduces edema and relieves painful urinary dysfunction

- Lin syndrome from Damp-Heat, above all Stone Lin, with hot, burning or dribbling painful urination
- Edema and swelling
- Edema from nephritis, where it can be given on its own

Clears Damp-Heat from the Liver and Gallbladder

- Damp-Heat of the Liver and Gallbladder, as in hepatitis, cholecystitis and gallstones
- High blood pressure showing Damp-Heat signs

Resolves jaundice

- Jaundice of either the Yin or the Yang type

Treats Xiao Ke

- Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder), also used for diabetes

yu yu liang

Bencao Index

yu zhu

Bencao Index

yuan hua

Bencao Index

yuan zhi

Bencao Index

Rhizoma Polygonati Odorati
fragrant solomonseal rhizome
Lung · Stomach

Nourishes Yin, moistens Dryness, moistens the Lungs, nourishes the Stomach and generates Fluids

- Cough from deficient Lung Yin, with a dry throat, thirst and irritability
- Dry cough, throat and mouth after a febrile illness has damaged the fluids
- Dry Heat in the Lungs and Stomach
- Stomach Yin deficiency with thirst, dry mouth, and hunger without wanting to eat
- Steaming bone disorder
- Wasting and thirsting with strong hunger and constipation

Extinguishes Wind and softens and moistens the sinews

- Internal Wind from depleted fluids, with painful, spasming sinews
- Dizziness from Yin deficiency with Wind stirring inside
- Exterior Wind-Heat in someone with a Yin-deficient constitution; being light and not cloying, it combines well with herbs that release the Exterior

Limonitum
Limonite
Large Intestine · Stomach

Astringes the Intestines and stops diarrhea

- Chronic diarrhea or dysentery
- Unstable Lower Jiao with diarrhea so severe it becomes incontinence
- Diarrhea from Yang deficiency of the Spleen and Kidneys, particularly in older people

Restrains leakage of fluids and stops bleeding

- Vaginal discharge that does not stop
- Persistent uterine bleeding

Radix Polygalae
Polygala Root
Lung · Heart

Calms the Spirit, quiets the Heart and restores communication between the Heart and Kidneys

- Insomnia, anxious palpitations, restlessness, irritability and disorientation
- Excessive brooding or bottled-up emotion, where it works best
- Heart and Kidneys failing to communicate

Expels Phlegm, opens the orifices, clears the Lungs and stops cough

- Phlegm clouding the Heart orifices, with emotional disturbance, confusion, forgetfulness, spasms or seizures
- Phlegm lodged in the Lungs with plentiful sputum, above all when it is hard to cough up
- Angina pectoris

Reduces abscesses and dissipates swelling

- Boils, abscesses and sores, and painful, swollen breasts or mastitis; applied as a powder or taken with wine

Flos Genkwa
Genkwa Flower
Lung · Large Intestine · Kidney

Drives out water, expels congested fluids and promotes urination

- Harsh purgative and diuretic for fluid that has pooled in the abdomen, flanks or chest, causing fullness, distension and difficult breathing
- Edema involving the five Zang organs

Transforms Phlegm and stops cough

- Cough and wheezing
- Chronic bronchitis where Damp and Cold predominate; can be taken on its own with sugar

Kills parasites (external)

- Tinea, scabies and other parasitic skin conditions
- Carbuncles and chilblains, applied externally

yue ji hua

Bencao Index

zang hong hua

Bencao Index

zao jiao

Bencao Index

zao jiao ci

Bencao Index

Stigma Croci
Tibetan saffron

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis and promotes menstruation

- Absent periods from Blood stasis
- Lochia retained after childbirth
- A stifling, full feeling in the chest and diaphragm brought on by emotional distress

Cools Blood and resolves toxicity

- High fever with a pale red maculopapular rash

Calms the Shen (associated use)

- Low mood, by long-standing association

Flos Rosae Chinensis
China Tea Rose
Liver

Invigorates Blood and regulates menstruation

- Blood stasis with scanty periods or amenorrhea
- Distending pain in the chest and abdomen from Blood stasis

Reduces swelling and resolves toxicity

- Swellings of the neck and scrofula, as a supporting herb

Regulates Qi

- Qi stagnation

Gleditsiae Spina
Gleditsia Thorn
Lung · Stomach · Liver

Draws out toxicity, discharges pus, invigorates Blood, disperses clumps and reduces swelling

- Swollen sores, carbuncles and abscesses in the early stage, to bring them to a head or make one that has formed burst

Expels Wind and kills parasites

- Tinea
- Leprosy
- Stubborn skin disease

Fructus Gleditsiae
Gleditsia Fruit
Lung · Large Intestine

Forcefully dispels Phlegm

- Stubborn Phlegm that stops Lung Qi descending: cough or wheezing, with thick, sticky sputum that is hard to bring up
- Chest congestion with laboured breathing
- Phlegm nodules

Opens the orifices and revives the Spirit

- Sudden collapse into unconsciousness from excess Phlegm, with clenched jaw, pallor and obstructed breathing
- Facial paralysis or seizures from excess Phlegm; it treats only the branch, so combine it with herbs for the root

Dissipates clumps and reduces swelling

- Boils and abscesses in their early stage, before they ulcerate
- Abscesses that will not discharge their pus

Unblocks the bowels and expels roundworms (as a suppository)

- Constipation or intestinal obstruction from roundworms

ze lan

Bencao Index

ze xie

Bencao Index

zhe bei mu

Bencao Index

zhen zhu

Bencao Index

Rhizoma Alismatis
Alisma Rhizome
Bladder · Kidney

Promotes urination and leaches out Damp

- Damp accumulation with difficult, painful or dribbling urination, diarrhea, and dizziness or vertigo
- Edema
- Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao, where it is especially useful

Calms the Ministerial Fire of the Kidneys by draining Damp-Heat from the Lower Jiao

- Spermatorrhea, premature ejaculation or nocturnal emissions when Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao stirs up the Kidney Ministerial Fire

Drains Kidney Fire

- Fire flaring upward from Kidney Yin deficiency

Herba Lycopi
bugleweed
Spleen · Liver

Invigorates Blood, dispels stasis and regulates menstruation

- Blood stasis obstructing the periods, which may be irregular, painful or absent
- Abdominal pain after childbirth from Blood stasis, with retained lochia

Reduces swelling and disperses masses

- Pain and swelling from abscesses, sores, bruising or traumatic injury, used internally and topically

Promotes urination and disperses swelling

- Generalised or facial edema, as a supporting herb
- Edema after childbirth
- Painful or dribbling urination after childbirth, as a supporting herb

Margaria
Heart · Liver

Settles the Heart, calms the Spirit and quiets palpitations and tremors

- Palpitations from fright, with irritability and insomnia
- Convulsions and seizures in children (fright Wind)
- Heart and Spirit out of harmony, so the person startles easily

Clears the Liver, brightens the eyes and removes superficial visual obstructions

- Blurred vision from pterygium or other surface eye disorders, applied as a powder
- Red, swollen, painful eyes and corneal nebula from Heat in the Liver channel

Clears Heat and toxicity, promotes healing and generates flesh (topical)

- Chronic ulcers and sores that will not heal, and macerated tissue, usually of the throat or gums
- Sores of the mouth and throat, applied as a very fine powder

Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii
thunberg fritillary bulb
Lung · Heart

Clears Heat, transforms Phlegm and stops cough

- Cough with phlegm in acute Lung Heat, of external or internal origin, for which it is among the more effective herbs

Clears Heat and dissipates nodules

- Neck swellings from Phlegm-Fire
- Scrofula and goiter
- Sores and carbuncles (Chuang Yong), particularly before they ulcerate
- Lung and breast abscesses

zhen zhu cao

Bencao Index

zhen zhu mu

Bencao Index

zhi cao wu

Bencao Index

zhi ke

Bencao Index

Concha Margaritiferae Usta
Mother Of Pearl
Heart · Liver

Calms the Liver, anchors Yang and drains Liver Fire
Liver Yang rising on a base of deficient Liver Yin, causing dizziness, vertigo, ringing in the ears and insomnia
Headache from rising Liver Yang, especially at the temples or the vertex

Clears the Liver and brightens the eyes
Blurred vision from Liver deficiency
Liver Heat with red, swollen or painful eyes, sensitivity to light and superficial visual obstruction

Settles fright and calms the Spirit
Palpitations, anxiety, irritability, insomnia and similar problems stemming from a disturbed Shen

Stops bleeding
Bleeding in the Upper Jiao

Promotes healing and relieves itching (topical, calcined)
Eczema and itchy skin, dusted on as a powder
Sores that will not heal, treated with the powdered calcined shell

Neutralises stomach acid and relieves pain
Peptic ulcer with pain and acid regurgitation
Excess stomach acidity

Herba Phyllanthi Urinariae
common leafflower
Lung · Liver

Calms the Liver, clears Heat, promotes urination and resolves toxicity
Enteritis and dysentery
Infectious hepatitis
Edema from kidney disease
Urinary tract infection
Nebula of the eye
Mouth ulcers (aphtha)
Porriga
Malnutrition in infants
Jaundice from Damp-Heat in the Liver and Gallbladder

Fructus Aurantii
Bitter Orange
Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen

Moves Qi, relieves distension and pressure and resolves hardness
Qi stagnation with accumulation, particularly in weak or deficient patients
Fullness and distension of the chest, epigastrium or abdomen, focal distension after meals, and belching

Clears food stagnation
Food stagnation

Directs rebellious Qi downward and disperses Phlegm
Cough with a stifling chest and plentiful phlegm

Assists bowel movement
Constipation from Qi stagnation or deficiency, including in older people, combined with herbs that tonify Qi or Yang

Moves Qi to help the Blood circulate
Blood stasis, in a supporting role

Radix Aconiti Kusnezoffi Preparata
prepared kusnezoff monkshood root
Spleen · Kidney · Liver

Disperses Cold, expels Wind, overcomes Damp and stops pain
Chronic Wind-Cold-Damp Bi with fixed, severe, cold pain in the joints and limbs
Cold pain of the abdomen, Cold hernia (Shan) pain, and pain of a Cold nature after traumatic injury
Cold-Damp aches, numbness and swelling, treated externally; it is used mainly topically

Reduces swelling and treats abscesses and lesions
Yin-type sores
Stubborn sores that will not come to a head
Ulcerated sores that fail to heal

zhi mu

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zhi shi

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zhi zi

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zhong jie feng

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Fructus Aurantii Immaturus
Unripe Bitter Orange
Large Intestine · Stomach · Spleen

Breaks up stagnant Qi, reduces accumulation, descends Qi, unblocks the bowels and clears food stagnation

- Stagnant, accumulated Qi with epigastric or abdominal pain and distension, or indigestion with focal distension and wind
- Food stagnation
- Constipation with a hard abdomen
- Dysentery with tenesmus

Transforms Phlegm, reduces distension and resolves hardness

- Turbid Phlegm blocking the Qi, with focal distension and fullness of the chest and epigastrium
- Painful obstruction of the chest (Xiong Bi) with Phlegm accumulation, used with herbs that support Heart Qi or Yang

Rhizoma Anemarrhenae
Anemarrhena Rhizome
Lung · Stomach · Kidney

Clears Heat and drains Fire from the Qi level, the Lungs and the Stomach

- High fever at the Qi level, with intense thirst, restlessness and irritability, and a surging, rapid pulse
- Dryness and Heat in the Lungs, with cough and thick yellow phlegm
- Yang Ming Heat
- Stomach Heat

Nourishes Yin and moistens Dryness

- Lung and Kidney Yin deficiency: sweating at night, steaming bone disorder, fever in the afternoon or of low grade, irritability, heat in the five centres (palms, soles and chest), and bleeding gums
- Stomach Yin deficiency
- Kidney Heat with spermatorrhea, nocturnal emissions or leakage of essence, and an abnormally strong sex drive

Generates Fluids, clears Deficiency Fire and relieves thirst

- Mouth ulcers or inflammation, a dry mouth and throat, and thirst from Yin deficiency
- Xiao Ke (wasting and thirsting disorder, the classical counterpart of diabetes) from Yin deficiency

Tempers the dryness of tonifying or warming herbs

- Added to herbs such as Huang Qi, Gui Zhi or Zhi Fu Zi when they risk being too drying

Herba Sarcandrae
glabrous sarcandra
Heart · Liver

Clears Heat, cools and invigorates the Blood, dissipates stagnation, reduces swelling, clears skin spots and relieves pain

- Purpura
- Malignant solid tumors
- Nausea
- Internal pain
- Cough

Dispels Wind and unblocks the channels

- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Traumatic injury and bruising
- Bone fractures

Fructus Gardeniae
Gardenia Fruit
Lung · Stomach · Heart · San Jiao · Liver

Clears Heat, drains Fire, relieves irritability in the San Jiao and calms the Spirit

- Excess Heat affecting the Heart, Liver and Stomach: high fever, restlessness, irritability, a stifling chest, sleeplessness or delirious talk
- Eye problems, anger and jaundice from Excess Heat

Clears Heat and drains Damp-Heat

- Lin syndrome: painful urination from Lower Jiao Damp-Heat
- Liver and Gallbladder Damp-Heat causing jaundice
- San Jiao Damp-Heat
- Damp-Heat rising through the Gallbladder and San Jiao channels to the face, with eye or nose problems or sores around the mouth and face

Cools the Blood, resolves toxicity and stops bleeding

- Blood Heat causing nosebleed, bloody vomit, or bleeding in the stool or urine; for bleeding the herb is partly charred

Reduces swelling and invigorates Blood

- Blood stagnation from trauma, applied topically, classically mixed with egg white and vinegar

zhong ru shi

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zhu li

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zhu ling

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zhu ma gen

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Succus Bambusae
Bamboo Sap
Lung · Stomach · Heart

Clears Heat, transforms Phlegm and penetrates the channels

Fainting, hemiplegia or paralysed hands and feet when Phlegm blocks the orifices of the Heart
Wind-Stroke with loss of speech, sudden unconsciousness, clenched jaw or seizures
Convulsions in children

Transforms Phlegm-Heat and stops cough

Cough from Phlegm-Heat, as a strong supporting herb
Thick, sticky yellow sputum with a congested, stifling chest

Stalactitum
stalactite
Lung

Warms the Lungs, resolves Phlegm, stops cough and calms wheezing

Cough, wheezing or asthma from Cold Phlegm with thin white sputum, particularly where Kidney Yang is also deficient
Wheezing and breathlessness from Lung consumption

Tonifies Kidney Yang and helps the Kidneys grasp Qi

Impotence and spermatorrhea
Cold, painful feet
Wheezing and shortness of breath, worse on breathing in, when weak Kidney Yang cannot grasp Qi
Fatigue, frequent urination at night, and a cold, aching lower back and knees from Kidney Yang deficiency

Benefits Qi, tonifies the Stomach and promotes lactation

Too little breast milk after childbirth

Calms stomach acid

Acid regurgitation or hyperacidity with stomach pain

Radix Boehmeriae
ramie root
Heart · Liver

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

Blood Heat bleeding (coughing or vomiting blood, nosebleed) or purpura; may be given as a single herb

Calms the fetus and prevents miscarriage

Restless fetus from accumulated Heat; can be used alone

Clears Heat, cools the Blood and opens the water passages to promote urination

Damp-Heat pouring into the Bladder with scanty or dribbling urine
Painful urination, blood in the urine or gonorrhea
Thirst

Cools the Blood and resolves toxicity

Fresh herb crushed and applied to toxic sores: carbuncles and toxic swellings, erysipelas, furuncles on the shoulders or back, and snakebite

Polyporus
Polyporus
Spleen · Bladder · Kidney

Promotes urination and leaches out Damp

Damp with fluid stagnation, causing edema, scanty or difficult urination, vaginal discharge, cloudy painful urination (Milky Lin), jaundice and diarrhea
Lin syndrome in pregnancy, where it may be given on its own

Clears Damp-Heat

Damp-Heat with Milky Lin and jaundice
Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao with vaginal discharge or spermatorrhea

zhu ru

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zhu sha

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zhu sha gen

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zhu ye

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Cinnabaris
Cinnabar
Heart

Sedates the Heart and calms the Spirit

- Restlessness, palpitations, anxiety, insomnia and convulsions from a disturbed Spirit
- Heart Fire, combined with suitable herbs
- Phlegm-Fire harassing the Heart, combined with suitable herbs
- Heart Blood deficiency, combined with suitable herbs

Expels Phlegm, settles fright and convulsions and stops tremor

- Seizures, childhood convulsions and related problems from Phlegm-Heat blocking the Pericardium and Heart
- Dizziness from Wind-Phlegm
- Lung Heat

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity and prevents putrefaction

- Carbuncles, ulcers, mouth sores, sore throat and snakebite, applied topically

Caulis Bambusae in Taenia
Bamboo Shavings
Lung · Stomach · Gallbladder

Clears Heat and transforms Phlegm-Heat

- Phlegm-Heat in the Lungs with thick, sticky yellow sputum, a stifling chest, or sputum streaked with blood

Clears Gallbladder Heat and calms the Spirit

- Gallbladder Fire with Phlegm, or Phlegm-Heat
- Phlegm and Gallbladder Fire harassing the Heart, with irritability, insomnia, a bitter taste, distension under the ribs, dizziness and profuse phlegm

Clears Stomach Heat and stops vomiting

- Stomach Heat of Excess or deficiency type, with bad breath, vomiting of bitter or sour fluid, aversion to heat and a greasy yellow tongue coat
- Nausea, acid regurgitation, hiccup or belching when Heat disturbs a weakened Stomach Qi
- Nausea and vomiting of pregnancy

Cools the Blood and stops bleeding

- Bleeding from Heat in the Blood

Calms the fetus

- Restless fetus

Lung · Stomach · Heart

Clears Heat, relieves irritability and generates Fluids

- Heart and Stomach Heat, with irritability and thirst

Clears Heat and promotes urination

- Painful urination from Heat in the Heart and Small Intestine

Radix Ardisiae Crenatae
coral ardisia root
Lung · Liver

Clears Heat, resolves toxicity, invigorates Blood and relieves pain

- Acute pharyngitis and laryngitis
- Tonsillitis
- Diphtheria
- Erysipelas
- Lymphadenitis
- Coughing blood from internal damage and overexertion
- Chest and abdominal pain linked to nervous tension
- Bone pain from Wind-Damp
- Internal and external injury
- Common cold
- Painful, swollen gums
- Eczema
- Excess Heat in the Lungs and Stomach

zi bai pi

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zi cao

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zi he che

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zi hua di ding

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Arnebiae
arnebia root
Heart · Liver

Clears Heat, cools and invigorates the Blood, resolves Fire toxin and vents rashes

Heat at the Blood (Xue) level, Blood Heat or toxic Heat with dark purple rashes, as in eczema, measles or chickenpox
Eruptive diseases such as mumps or chickenpox when the rash has stalled and will not come out
Amenorrhea and painful periods

Moistens the Intestines, unblocks the bowels and promotes urination

Blood Heat with mild constipation
Rashes together with constipation or difficult urination

Clears Damp-Heat from the skin and aids tissue healing (topical)

Skin lesions from Damp-Heat, eczema, dermatitis or vaginal itching, applied topically
Burns and wounds, applied topically

Cortex Catalpae
catalpa bark

Clears Heat toxins

Vomiting
Ulcers
Itching (pruritus)

Kills intestinal parasites

Intestinal parasites, including roundworm

Treats eye disease

Eye disorders

Herba Violae
Tokyo violet
Heart · Liver

Clears Heat and resolves Fire toxin

Hot, red swellings (Chuang Yong), especially hot, red, swollen eyes and a painful, swollen throat or ears
Mumps
Snakebite
Abscesses of the breast or intestines
Erysipelas

Treats hot sores, internally and externally

Boils, carbuncles, sores and abscesses, particularly on the head and back

Placenta Hominis
Human Placenta
Lung · Kidney · Liver

Tonifies the Liver and Kidneys, warms Kidney Yang and strengthens Jing

Deficient Kidney Qi and Jing with Blood deficiency, causing infertility, impotence, spermatorrhea, low libido, low back pain, light-headedness and ringing in the ears
Kidney Yang deficiency with weak lower back and knees

Tonifies Qi and nourishes Blood

Depleted Qi and Blood with wasting, pallor or too little breast milk, particularly after a serious illness
Weakness after childbirth
Fatigue, poor appetite and slow recovery of weight and strength following severe or chronic illness
Seizure disorder that does not remit

Tonifies Lung Qi, augments Kidney Jing and helps the Lungs receive Qi

Wheezing from deficiency of the Lungs and Kidneys, used especially between acute attacks
Consumption with night sweats, wasting and debility
Long-standing cough and wheezing

zi ran tong

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zi shi ying

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zi su geng

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zi su ye

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Fluoritum
Fluorite
Heart · Liver

Sedates the Heart, calms the Spirit and settles tremor and palpitations

Disorientation, insomnia, fright, restlessness, anxious palpitations or convulsions from Heart Blood deficiency or rising Liver Yang

Warms the Lungs and descends Qi

Chronic cough or wheezing from Deficiency Cold of the Lungs, with thin, watery, plentiful sputum

Warms the Uterus and Kidneys and unblocks the Chong and Ren vessels

Heavy periods, uterine bleeding or infertility when the Uterus is Cold and deficient

Pyritum
Pyrite
Liver

Dispels Blood stasis, relieves pain and promotes healing of bones and sinews

Swelling and pain from stagnant Qi and Blood after external injury, above all fractures
Bruising from traumatic injury
Fractures, to speed their healing
Sprains, strains and contusions that come with a fracture

Folium Perillae
Perilla Leaf
Lung · Spleen

Releases the Exterior and disperses Wind-Cold

Wind-Cold with fever and chills, headache, blocked nose, cough or a stifling chest, particularly in older people

Moves Spleen and Stomach Qi, harmonises the Middle Jiao, eases the Lungs and opens the chest

Stagnant Spleen and Stomach Qi with nausea, vomiting or loss of appetite
Fullness of the chest and epigastrium where Wind-Cold coincides with Qi stagnation
Asthma and wheezing brought on by Cold
Distension of the chest
Intestinal gas

Calms the fetus and eases morning sickness

Restless fetus or morning sickness linked to Qi stagnation

Resolves seafood poisoning

Poisoning from fish or crab, with nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain; used alone or with fresh ginger

Caulis Perillae
Perilla Stem
Lung · Stomach · Spleen

Moves Qi, harmonises the Middle Jiao, opens the chest and loosens the diaphragm

Stagnant Qi of the chest and abdomen: focal distension or a stifled feeling, sometimes extending to rib-side distension and pain
Tightness and stuffiness around the chest and diaphragm, along with nausea or poor appetite
Hiccup

Calms the fetus and stops nausea and vomiting

Morning sickness
Restless fetus from Qi stagnation
Fullness of the chest and epigastrium in pregnancy from stagnant Qi

Relieves toxicity

Food poisoning from fish and shellfish, acting more mildly than the leaf

zi su zi

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zi wan

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zong lu

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Radix Asteris
Aster Root
Lung

Stops cough and expels Phlegm

Cough from many causes: Wind-Cold or Wind-Heat, deficient Lungs, or consumption from Yin deficiency
Mainly chronic cough, especially of a Cold type, with abundant sputum that is hard to bring up or streaked with blood
Asthma, rebellious Qi, and Phlegm with a stale feeling

Moistens the Lungs

Chronic cough from Lung deficiency; in Heat or Dryness patterns it is combined with cooling, moistening herbs

Directs Lung Qi downward

Acute and chronic cough

Fructus Perillae
Perilla Fruit
Lung · Large Intestine

Stops cough, calms wheezing, descends Qi and transforms Phlegm

Cough and wheezing with plentiful phlegm from Phlegm accumulation
Breathing out harder than breathing in, with a stifling chest, where it is especially useful
Rebellious Lung Qi with cough, breathlessness and a tight chest
Thin or Cold-type phlegm obstructing the Lungs

Moistens the Intestines and unblocks the bowels

Constipation from dry Intestines, often alongside the cough it is treating

Petiolus Trachycarpi
Trachycarpus Stipe Fiber
Lung · Large Intestine · Liver

Astringes leakage of Blood and stops bleeding

Coughing or vomiting of blood, nosebleed, and blood in the stool or urine
Heavy uterine bleeding or heavy periods (Beng Lou)
Chronic bleeding once any stasis or Heat has been addressed, since it only binds and does not correct the cause

Dries Damp (minor use)

Vaginal discharge of a Damp type