LESSON 5: Herbs that Drain Dampness & Herbs that Expel Wind Damp

Herbs that Drain Dampness

Dampness is the accumulation of fluid in the body; as a pathogen it has the characteristics of sticky, heavy, slow moving, and is difficult to resolve. Internally, dampness is a yin pathogen that arises from spleen or kidney deficiency, because it is a yin pathogen it may easily injure yang. Generally dampness sinks to the lower aspects of the body causing edema, arthritis, elimination difficulties, and swellings. When dampness affects the upper part of the body it primarily affects the lung and the lung meridian.

Symptoms associated with dampness vary depending on location and whether it is associated with heat. General symptoms are: heavy feeling, “muzzy” feeling of the head, fullness in the epigastrium and chest, poor appetite, urinary difficulties, the pulse will be slippery, and the tongue coating will be sticky or wet.

When dampness combines with heat there will be symptoms of red suppurative sores, jaundice, painful urination, foul smelling diarrhea and genital infections. These symptoms are treated with the combination of heat clearing damp drying and draining herbs.

Therapeutically, dampness may be dried, drained or transformed; this group of herbs drains dampness by moving the pathogenic fluids out through the urinary bladder. Biomedically, these herbs are considered diuretics. As with any therapeutic principle that involves the removal of fluids from the body care must be taken to ensure yin is not depleted in the process.

Herbs to be discussed in this section are:

• Fu Ling - *Poria cocos*
• Yi Yi Ren - *Ciox lachryma jobi*
• Ze Xie - *Alisma plantago-aquatica*
• Che Qian Zi - *Plantago asiatica*
Herbs that Dispel Wind Damp

Wind damp is the combination of dampness and wind. Since we have already discussed the qualities of dampness in the previous section, we will limit this discussion to the qualities of wind.

Wind, internally and externally, moves quickly, it is constantly changing, often accompanied by cold or heat and damp. In this section we will be focusing on internal wind and it's presence with dampness.

Together they tend to take residence in the joints or the skin. They cause migratory pain, which in the joints presents as swelling and on the skin as itching. At the joints wind damp is considered to contribute to painful obstruction: biomedically called arthritis; symptoms include: pain that is heavy and moves from joint to joint.

When wind damp is associated with cold the symptoms are severe pain, better with heat, this pain has a tendency to be in a fixed location and has a decrease in mobility.

Wind damp associated with heat will have more severe swelling and a burning pain that presents with redness.

Wind damp may be wind dominant or damp dominant. Wind dominant painful obstruction has the main characteristic of wandering pain. Damp dominant painful obstruction has the main characteristic of swelling and heaviness, and accompanying symptom of numbness.

Generally these herbs are anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antipyretic and have circulation promoting properties. Because arthritis (painful obstruction/ Bi Syndrome) is mainly located at the joints (sinews, tendons and bones) a lot of these herbs act on the liver and kidney meridians.

In this section we will discuss the following herbs:

- Du Huo - *Radix Angelicae pubescentis*
- Qin Jiao - *Radix Gentianae Qinjiao*
- Mu Gua - *Fructus Chaenomelis*
- Wu Jia Pi - *Cortex Acanthopanacis*
- Cang Er Zi - *Fructus Xanthii sibirici*
**Fu Ling** *Poria cocos*

**Family:** Polyporaceae

**Other names:** yun ling, bai fu ling, fang ling kuai, Poria, Tuckahoe, Indian bread, or Hoelen

**Plant description:** A solid white fungus that grows on the roots of old, dead pine trees, the outer skin should be reddish.

**Part used:** Scleroderma of fungus

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Hubei, Anhui, Henan, Yunnan (superior quality, known as *yun fu ling*), Guizhou, Sichuan, harvested July thru to March

**History:** First documented in *The Divine Husbandman's Classic of Materia Medica*

**Constituents:** Beta-pachyman, a polysaccharide beta-pachymarose, several organic acids such as tumulosic acid, eubricoic acid, pinicolic acid, and pachymic acid, 3-beta-hydroxylanosta-7, 9(11). 24-trien-21-oic acid, chitin, protein, fat, glucose, sterols, lecithin, gum, choline, adenine

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** Sweet, bland and neutral, entering the heart, spleen and lung meridians

**Actions and Indications:** Tranquilizing, diuretic, cardiotonic effects, anticancer

**Medical Research:**
- *Chem Pharm Bull (Tokyo)* 1997 Mar;45(3):492-4 - Effect of the basidiomycete *Poria cocos* on experimental dermatitis and other inflammatory conditions
- *Oncology* 1996 Sep-Oct;53(5):382-5 - Inhibitory effects of lanostane-type triterpene acids, the components of *Poria cocos*, on tumor promotion by 12-O-tetradecanoylphorbol-13-acetate in two-stage carcinogenesis in mouse skin
- *Planta Med* 1995 Dec;61(6):527-30 - Anti-emetic principles of *Poria cocos*

- Intraperitoneal injections to healthy rabbits and rats that had adrenalectomies showed increased secretion of sodium, some researchers believe this is due to the herbs high potassium concentrations.
- Tranquilizing effect on mice.
- Relaxing effect on rabbit intestine specimens.

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** caution in cases of excessive urination from cold deficiency. It is recommended not to take large doses of fu ling or for a long period of time. Fu ling is thought to counteract *qin jiao* (*Radix Gentianae Qinjiao*), *di yu* (*Radix Sanguisorbae Officinalis*), and Bie Jia (*Carapax Amydae Sinensis*).

**Medicinal uses:**
- Promotes urination and drains dampness: urinary difficulty, diarrhea or edema due to stagnation of fluids, and for scanty urination due to damp-heat.
- Strengthens spleen and harmonizes the middle burner: deficiency diarrhea, loss of appetite and epigastric distention.
- Strengthens spleen and transforms phlegm: congestion of fluids causing palpitations, headache, dizziness (accompanying signs of thick pale greasy tongue coating).
- Quiets heart and calms the shen: palpitations, insomnia or forgetfulness.

There are 4 layers to the fungus of Fu ling. Each with varying uses:

**Fu ling pi:** pi meaning peel, it is the outer layer of the fungal node. It is black/brown on the outside and grayish brown on the inside. Therapeutically it is used to promote urination and reduce edema. It is less tonifying than fu ling (*bai fu ling*).

**Bai fu ling:** meaning white fu ling. Most commonly used, and referred to as fu ling (This is the fu ling discussed in this monograph).

**Chi fu ling:** meaning red fu ling. The red part grows closest to the peel, in between the white part and the brown peel. Therapeutically it is used facilitating urination, useful in cases of: scanty urine, dark urine and urinary difficulty.

**Fu shen:** this is the innermost part of the fungus including the root of the pine tree. It is used primarily for calming the spirit.
Pharmacy and dosage: 9-15g, up to 60g may be used for facial edema

Major Combinations:
• With ze xie (Rhizoma Alismatis Orientalis) for painful urination, add gui zhi (Ramulus Cinnamomi Cassiae) and bai zhi (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) for edema and a feeling of heaviness throughout body
• With che qian zi (Semen Plantaginis) for cloudy painful urination
• With ban xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae) to expel phlegm and damp causing vomiting. Add chen pi (Citri Reticulatae) for congested feeling in the chest with accompanying symptoms of nausea and loss of appetite
• With mu xiang (Radix Aucklandiae Lappae) for damp diarrhea and accompanying borborygmy
• With gan cao (Radix Glycyrrhiza Uralensis) for palpitations, shortness of breath and facial edema due to spleen and heart deficiency
• With suan zao ren (Semen Zizyphi Spinosae), yuan zhi (Radix Polygalae Tenuifoiae) and wu wei zi (Fructus Schisandrae Chinensis) for palpitations and insomnia

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Images www.plumdragonherbs.com, mdidea.com
**Yi Yi Ren** *Coix lacryma jobi*

*Yi Yi Ren* 養胃仁

**Other names**: St. Job's tears, yi ren, yi mi, yi ren mi, coix, adlay, adlay millet

**Plant description**: This annual grass is native to south-east Asia and grows to a height of around 3 ft. (1 m), with knobbly, bamboo-like stems from the bases of which new 'tillers' arise, these sometimes self-layering. The glossy deep green leaves are up to 2 in (5 cm) wide with slightly wavy edges. The flowering and fruiting spikelets are insignificant, but the shiny, pea-sized receptacles that enclose their bases harden in fall (autumn) to a pale bluish gray and have often been used for beads and other decorative purposes. Some selected strains are cultivated for their edible grains.¹

**Part used**: seed

**Habitat, ecology and distribution**: throughout China, especially in the provinces of Hebei, Fujian, Liaoning

**History**: The Divine Husbandman's Classic of Materia Medica

** Constituents**: coixol, coixenolide, Vitamin B1, leucine, lysine, arginine

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered**: sweet, bland and slightly cold, entering the spleen, lung, and kidney meridians

**Actions and Indications**: bronchodilator, anticancer, diuretic

**Medical Research**:
- Preparations made from the oil of yi yi ren injected into the striated muscles of frogs showed decreased muscle spasm (mechanism involved muscles and not nerves)
- Low dosages of the oil of yi yi ren stimulates respiration and high doses inhibits respiration
- Inhibitory affect on neoplastic cells ²

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions**: use with caution during pregnancy, lethal dosage in mice - 5-10 g/kg subcutaneously, and in rabbits - 1-1.5 g/kg intravenously

**Medicinal uses**:
- According to Hartwell (1967-1971), the fruits are used in folk remedies for abdominal tumors, esophageal, gastrointestinal, and lung cancers, various tumors, as well as
excrescences, warts, and whitlows. This folk reputation is all the more interesting when reading that coixenolide has antitumor activity (List and Horhammer, 1969-1979). Job's tear is also a folk remedy for abscess, anodyne, anthrax, appendicitis, arthritis, beriberi, bronchitis, catarrh, diabetes, dysentery, dysuria, edema, fever, goiter, halitosis, headache, hydrothorax, phthisis, pleurisy, pneumonia, puerperium, rheumatism, smallpox, splenitis, strangury, tenesmus, and worms (Duke and Wain, 1981). Walker (1971) cites other medicinal uses.3

• Promotes urination and drains dampness: edema, urinary difficulty, damp leg qi
• Strengthens spleen and stops diarrhea
• Clears heat and expels pus: for carbuncles, as well as lung and large intestine abscesses
• Expels wind damp in the joints, relating to arthritis
• Clears damp heat involving digestion with the presentation of greasy tongue coating and slippery pulse
• Also used to treat plantar warts

**Pharmacy and dosage:** 9-30g, dry fry for spleen tonification, may be taken long term

**Major Combinations:**
• With dong gua pi (*Epicarpium Benincasae Hispidae*) for scanty urination due to damp obstruction
• Add fu ling (*Sclerotium Poriae Cocos*) and bai zhu (*Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephala*) for spleen deficiency diarrhea
• With lu gen (*Rhizoma Phragmitis Communis*), dong gua ren (*Semen Benincasae Hispidae*) and tao ren (*Semen Persicae*) for lung abscesses
• With bai jiang cao (*Herba cum Radice Patriniae*) and mu dan pi (*Cortex Moutan Radicis*) for intestinal abscesses

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Image chinese.herbs.webs-sg.com
Ze Xie  *Alisma plantago-aquatica*
泽泻

**Other names:** alisma, water plantain, fu ze xie

**Plant description:** perennial erect 4"-40" semiaquatic, 3 petals much longer than sepals parted 1/4 inch white-flower; head whorls of 4 or more, blooms Jun.-Sep., fruit: achene 1 dorsal groove, leaf: elliptical, long stalk, smooth, firm; emersed or terrestrial

**Part used:** herb, tuberous stem

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Fujian, Jiangxi, Sichuan

**History:** The Divine Husbandman's Classic of Materia Medica

**Constituents:** alisol A, alisol B, alisol A monacetate, alisol B monacetate, epialisol A, asparagus, beta-sitosterol

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** sweet, bland and cold, entering the bladder and kidney meridians

**Actions and Indications:** diuretic, anesthetic, antihypertensive, lowers blood lipids: total cholesterol, inhibits hardening of main artery, prevents fatty liver, anti-pyretic (lowering fever), anti-bacterial (inhibits mycobacterium tuberculosis), hypoglycemic, hypotensive, galactagogue (promote milk secretion), anti tumor, induces interferon, anti-allergic

**Medical Research:**
- Diuretic effect varies depending on season of harvesting: winter harvesting has the most potent effect and springs the least potent. Preparations increased the excretion of sodium and urea; this may be due to a high potassium concentration
- Intravenous injections into anesthetized dogs lowered their blood pressure
- Preparations lower blood glucose

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** contraindicated when there is kidney deficiency yang, spermatorrhea or vaginal discharge, as well as damp cold. Although this is a very safe herb, oral preparations of 4g/kg can irritate the intestinal tract of rats and long-term ingestion caused gastroenteritis.
Medicinal uses:
- Promotes urination and drains dampness: stagnation of damp causing edema, diarrhea and difficult urination
- Drains kidney fire: for kidney yin deficiency (i.e.: dizziness, tinnitus), although this herb promotes urination it is less likely to injure yin compared with the other damp draining herbs
- Used for urinary tract infections, hematuria and cystitis
- Used for acute diarrhea, enteritis
- Used for allergic rhinitis, urticaria and asthma
- Used for edema and nephritis

Pharmacy and dosage: 6-15g

Major Combinations:
- With mu tong (Caulis Mutong) for painful urination and edema
- With sha ren (Fructus Amomi) for painful scanty urination with abdominal distention
- With ban xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae ternatae) for epigastric and abdominal distention, scanty urination, due to turbid dampness stagnating in the middle burner
- With mu dan pi (Cortex Moutan Radicis) for dizziness, vertigo, deep hot pain in bones

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Image plumdragonherbs.com
Che Qian Zi *Plantago asiatica*

**Other names:** che qian ren, plantain

**Plant description:** Ellipsoid, irregularly oblong or triangular oblong, slightly flattened, about 2 mm long, 1 mm wide. Externally yellowish-brown to dark brown, with fine wrinkles, and a grayish-white concave pointed hilum on one side. Texture hard.

**Part used:** seeds

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** grown throughout northern China, harvested in summer and autumn once seeds have ripened

**History:** The Divine Husbandman's Classic of Materia Medica

**Constituents:** plantasan, plantagomucilage A, platenolic acid, palmitic acid, arachidic acid, succinic acid, adenine, cholic acid, stearic acid, oleic acid, linoleic acid, linolenic acid

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** sweet and cold, entering the bladder, kidney, liver and lung meridians

**Actions and Indications:** Anti-inflammatory, antitussive, antidiarrheal, diuretic, expectorant, lowers blood pressure

**Medical Research:**
- Injections of che qian zi into the joint capsule has the effect of tightening the lax joint; this has been used clinically in cases of recurrent dislocation of the temporomandibular joint (TMJ)
- Roasted and ground into powder and used to treat uncomplicated indigestion in children; of 63 cases, 53 had no more diarrhea within 2.1 days and 6 had marked reduction of bowel movements - effective within 2.5 days
- Powdered che qian zi was used to treat 68 cases of mal positioned fetus at the 8th month, 90% of the cases had normal presentation at birth

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** Contraindicated during pregnancy, except for mal positioned fetus, use with caution when there is yang deficiency or spermatorrhea due to kidney deficiency or overwork.
**Medicinal uses:**

- Promote urination and clear heat: for damp heat edema or urinary obstruction (damp heat in the lower burner)

- Damp heat diarrhea: promotes urination to solidify the stools

- Clears the eyes: for liver/kidney deficiency, liver heat. Here it is best to use the whole plant, which is more effective at relieving toxicity and clearing heat. Use topically or orally (9-30g); useful for abscesses and swellings as well.

- Expels phlegm and stops cough: lung heat with copious sputum

- More effective than many Chinese or Western herbs for back and neck pain.

"*In sufficient quantities it is mildly paralyzing and creates a euphoric but clear minded state in which the drinker cannot be annoyed.*" - - Dr. W. Arthur Whistler

**Pharmacy and dosage:** 4.5 - 9g, wrap in cheesecloth during decoction, dry fry to promote urination; fry in wine to tonify kidneys.

**Major Combinations:**

- With zi xie (*Rhizoma Alismatis orientalis*) for edema, distention, and painful urination
- With niu xi (*Radix Achyranthis bidentatae*) for kidney deficiency edema
- With hai jin sha (*Spora Lygodii japonici*) and zhi zi (*Fructus Gardeniae jasminoidis*) for dribbling painful urination due to heat in the lower burner
- With bai zhu (*Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae*) and yi yi ren (*Semen Coicis Lachryma jobi*) for diarrhea presenting with reduced urination due to either spleen deficiency or dampness bearing summerheat
- With cang zhu (*Rhizoma Atractylodis*) for vaginal discharge due to damp heat and spleen deficiency
- With shu di huang (*Radix Rehmanniae glutinosae conquitae*), gou qi zi (*Fructus Lyci*) and tu si zi (*Semen Cuscutae chinensis*) for cataracts due to liver and kidney deficiency

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Image tcm.health-info.org
Du Huo  *Angelica pubescens*  

**Other names:** tu huo, angelica root

**Plant description:** The leaves have enlarged convex sheaths at the base of the leaf stalks and have 2 to 3 pinnate parts. They become smaller toward the top of the plant and are less clefted. The upper part of this herb is branchy. At the branch’s end grow the inflorescences; 20-40 radiate double umbels with bristly small leaves. The tiny greenish-white flowers smell of honey. Some angelica plants flower white blossoms or more rarely, pale-purple flowers. Oval fruits are ridged with thin lateral wings. Angelica can grow 5 to 8 feet tall.1

**Part used:** root

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Hubei, Sichuan, Anhui, Zhejiang, Jangxi, Guangxi, harvested in spring or late autumn. The roots are dried in the sun and then sliced.

**History:** Divine Husbandman's Classic of Materia Medica

**Constituents:** angelol, angelicene, bergapten, osthol, umbelliferone, scopoletin, angelic acid, tiglic acid, palmitic acid, sterols, stearic acid, linolenic acid, oleic acid, glucose, essential oils (The essential oils obtained from the seeds and roots by steam distillation are known to contain d-phellandrene, -pinene, ostheneole, osthole, angelicin, -thujene, camphene, and numerous other compounds (1.1-242, 1.2-112). The fruits of angelica contain a higher percentage of oil and are rich in coumarins (1.2-113, 14.1-35). Root oil is considered superior to the oils obtained from other parts of the plant) 2, Hydroxynaphthaquinone 3

**Energetics, Properties and Channels Entered:** bitter, pungent and warm, entering the kidney and bladder meridians

**Actions and Indications:** Tranquilizing, sleep-inducing, anti-arthritic, hypotensive, antibiotic activity against *tuberculosis bacilli*, analgesic, diaphoretic, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, uterine stimulant, emmenagogue, expectorant, interferon inducent.5

**Medical Research:**
- Decoctions given orally and intra peritoneally to rats and mice showed both a tranquilizing and hypnotic effect
- Alcohol extractions of du huo showed an increased antihypertensive effect in comparison with water extractions
• Inhibitory effect \textit{in vitro} against \textit{tuberculosis bacilli}

\textbf{Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:} All members of this genus contain furocoumarins, which increase skin sensitivity to sunlight and may cause dermatitis.6

\textbf{Medicinal uses:}
\begin{itemize}
  \item Dispels wind damp and stops pain: wind-cold-damp of the lower body
  \item Specific for disorders below the waist
  \item Disperses wind-cold-damp and releases the exterior: external attack of wind cold damp
  \item Used for shao yin stage headache and toothache
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Pharmacy and dosage:} 3-9 g

\textbf{Major Combinations:}
\begin{itemize}
  \item With xi xin (\textit{Herba cum Radice asari}) and qin jiao (\textit{Radix Gentianae qinjiao}) for wind damp pain of neck, back and lower extremities
  \item With qiang huo (\textit{Rhizoma et Radix notopterygii}), gao ben (\textit{Rhizoma et Radix Ligustici}) and man jing zi (\textit{Fructus Viticis}) for headache due to external wind cold damp
  \item With ma huang (\textit{Herba Ephedrae}) for external wind cold with out sweating (symptoms of body aches and pains)
  \item With fang feng (\textit{Radix Ledebouriellae divaricatae}) for numbness of the legs due to wind damp 7
\end{itemize}

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Image tcm.health-info.org
Qin Jiao *Radix Gentianae Qinjiao*  

**Other names:** *Gentiana macrophylla* root, chin-chiu

**Plant description:** This plant has a thick, branching, yellowish brown root that produces a hollow, erect stem reaching four feet in height. The stem bears opposite obovate leaves that are bright green, sessile, and have five prominent veins. Lower leaves are also present and emerge from the root. Large, orange-yellow flowers bloom from July to August, appearing in the upper leaf axils, growing in whorls of 3 to 10 blossoms. The fruit is an obovate capsule.

**Part used:** root

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Gansu, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Inner Mongolia, throughout northeastern China; harvested in spring or autumn

**History:** The herb reputedly takes its name from a 2nd century BCE king of Illyria named Gentius, who discovered its ability to reduce fevers.

Powerfully bitter, the herb is an essential ingredient of traditional aperitifs and such bitters as Angostura bitters. The customary aperitif is taken about one-half hour before meals, but it has become more of a social expectation rather than a medicinal one.

In medieval times, it was an ingredient of the alchemical brew called "theriac", a supposed cure-all made according to a highly secret recipe.

It was officially listed in the US Pharmacopoeia from 1820 to 1882.

Qin Jiao is one of the 252 herbs listed in the Divine Husbandman's Classic (*Shen nong Ben cao jing*), a Chinese herbal written in the 1st century CE. 2

** Constituents:** gentianine, gentianidine

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** bitter, pungent, slightly cold, entering the gallbladder, liver and stomach meridians

**Actions and Indications:** anti-inflammatory, analgesic, sedative, antibiotic, antifungal, antihypertensive

**Medical Research:** • In rats with arthritis artificially induced by formaldehyde, gentianine given intraperitoneally (90 mg/kg) was as effective as aspirin (200mg/kg),
this was attributed to its effect on the adrenals, since it had no anti-inflammatory effect in adrenalectomized animals. Gentianine acts as a prophylactic against histamine shock in guinea pigs and anaphylactic shock in rats. It also markedly lowers the permeability of the capillaries.

- A small dose of gentianine acts as a central nervous system sedative in mice and rats, but is stimulatory in large dosage. Gentianine is an effective analgesic in both rats and mice. There is a synergistic effect with Rhizoma Corydalis Yanhusuo (yan hu suo).
- Qin jiao has an inhibitory effect in vitro against many bacteria including Staphylococcus aureus, Streptococcus pneumoniae, Shigella and Vibrio cholerae. It showed the same in vitro effects against many pathogenic fungi.
- Preparations of qin jiao infected intramuscularly were used in treating 21 cases of meningitis (type not reported). All 21 cases recovered with in 3-7 days, and no sequellae developed.
- Qin jiao (both water and alcohol extractions) was shown to lower the blood pressure in a variety of animal studies. Duration of effect was short.
- Gentianine's anti-inflammatory property has been studied in rat hind leg inflammation caused by subcutaneous injection of egg white at the ankle joint. Administered intraperitoneally at dosage of 90 mg/kg, 30 minutes before the egg white, it was effective in reducing swelling and causing its disappearance sooner than controls. Further study revealed that the substance does not work on the adrenal glands per se; its action is mediated by the nervous and hypophyseal system. In formalin-induced arthritis, gentianine was more effective than sodium salicylate, and just as effective as chloroquine and cortisone.
- If gentian is being used on a daily basis, the following drugs may be imperfectly absorbed: tetracycline derivatives, oral anticholinergics, phenothiazines, digoxin, isoniazid, phenytoin, and warfarin.
- Certain antipsychotic drugs, such as phenothiazines, as well as other psychoactive agents which are poorly absorbed in the gastrointestinal tract, may be even more poorly absorbed if gentian is also being used.

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** humans taking relatively high dosage of this herb have developed nausea and vomiting,

**Medicinal uses:**
- Dispels wind-dampness and relaxes the sinews: Painful obstruction of the extremities, acute or chronic, cold or hot
- Clears heat from deficiency: yin deficiency with fever and night sweats
- Resolves dampness and reduces jaundice: especially for acute cases and infants
- Moistens intestines and unblocks the bowels: for dry constipation.
- Also used to counteract drying qualities of other herbs that dispel wind damp
Pharmacy and dosage: 4.5-12g

Major Combinations:
• With zhi mu (*Rhizoma Anemarrhenae asphodeloidis*) and ren dong teng (*Caulis Lonicerae*) for hot painful obstruction
• With fang feng (*Radix Ledebouriellae divaricatae*), du huo (*Radix Angelicae pubescenti*) and qiang huo (*Rhizoma Notopterygii*) for wind cold damp painful obstruction
• With bie jia (*Carapax Amydae sinensis*), qing hao (*Herba Artemisiae annuae*), and di gu pi (*Cortex Lycii Radicis*) for yin deficiency heat associated with a long term illness
• With dang gui (*Radix Angelicae sinensis*) and bai shao (*Radix Paeoniae lactiflorae*) for hemiplegia presenting with blood deficiency
• With huang qin (*Radix Scutellariae*) and cang zhu (*Rhizoma Atractylodis*) for damp heat jaundice in children
• With huo ma ren (*Semen Cannabis sativae*) and yu li ren (*Semen Pruni*) for constipation due to dry intestines

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Mu Gua  *Fructus Chaenomelis*  木瓜

**Other names:** Chinese quince fruit, chen mu gua, xuan mu gua

**Plant description:** purplish-red colour with a wrinkled peel

**Part used:** fruit

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Anhui (best), Hubei, Sichuan, Zhejiang; harvested in autumn when fruit is ripe

**History:** Grandfather Lei's Discussion of Herb Preparation (470 CE)

**Constituents:** saponins, fructose, citric acid, flavones, tartaric acid, tannin

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** sour, slightly warm, enters the liver and spleen meridians

**Actions and Indications:** Anti-rheumatic, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, digestive, antiemetic ¹

**Medical Research:**
- Decoctions reduced swelling from arthritis in mice due to albumen injection ²
- Decoction inhibits the development of egg-white induced arthritis in mice ³

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** excessive use can harm teeth and bones, contraindicated for exterior disorders

**Medicinal uses:**
- Relaxes the sinews and unblocks the channels: damp painful obstruction of the extremities
- Harmonizes the stomach and transforms dampness: for abdominal pain, spasms, and cramping of the calves, and edema due to leg qi
- Reduces food stagnation: for indigestion ⁴

**Pharmacy and dosage:** 4.5-12g
Major Combinations:
• With huo xiang (*Herba Agastaches seu pogostemi*) and sha ren (*Frucus Amomi*) for sudden turmoil disorder - often characterized by spasms of the calf muscles due to summerheat
• With dang gui (*Radix Angelicae sinensis*) and Dai shao (*Radix Paeoniae lactiflorae*) for muscle spasms due to blood deficiency
• With hu gu (*Os tigris*) and du huo (*Radix Angelicae pubescentis*) for weakness, atrophy and joint pain in the lower extremities * Reference only, illegal!
• With wu zuo ju (*Fructus Evodiae rutaecarpae*), xiao hui xiang (*Fructus Foeniculi vulgaris*) and sheng jiang (*Rhizoma Zingiberis officinalis*) for damp cold abdominal pain and diarrhea.5

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Image plumdragonherbs.com
Wu Jia Pi
*Cortex Acanthopanacis graciistyli radicis*

**Family** - Araliaceae

**Other names**: acanthopanax root bark, nan wu jia pi, bark of 5 additions

**Plant description**: Irregular quills, 5-15 cm long, 0.4-1 cm in diameter, about 2 mm thick. Outer surface greyish-brown, with slightly twisted, longitudinal wrinkles, and transverse lenticels. Inner surface pale yellow or greyish-yellow, with fine longitudinal striations. Texture light, fragile, easily broken, fracture irregular, greyish-white.

**Part used**: skin of root (root bark)

**Habitat, ecology and distribution**: Hubei, Henan, Sichuan, Hunan, Anhui; harvested in summer or autumn

**History**: The Divine Husbandman's Classic of Materia Medica

** Constituents**: essential oils including: 4-methyl salicylaldehyde, tannin, palmitic acid, linoleic acid, and vitamins A and B1

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered**: pungent, bitter and warm, entering the liver and kidney meridians

**Actions and Indications**: Anti-rheumatic, diuretic, circulatory stimulant, antipyretic and analgesic

**Medical Research**: none noted

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions**: use with caution for yin deficiency with heat symptoms

**Medicinal uses**:
- Dispels wind dampness: for chronic wind damp painful obstruction
- Strengthens the sinews and bones: when liver and kidney deficiency generates weak or soft sinews and bones. Especially useful for obstruction to smooth flow of qi, for the elderly and developmental delays in the motor functions of children
- Transforms dampness and reduces swelling: for urinary difficulty, edema and damp leg qi
**Pharmacy and dosage**: 4.5-15g

**Major Combinations**:
- With wei ling xian (*Radix Clematidis*), qiang huo (*Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii*) and qin jiao (*Radix Gentianae Qinjiao*) for pain and muscular spasms due to wind damp painful obstruction
- With sang ji sheng (*Ramulus Sang ji sheng*), niu xi (*Radix Achyranthis bidentatae*) and xu duan (*Radix Dipsaci asperi*) for painful obstruction due to long term illness and subsequent liver and kidney deficiency. This combination is especially useful for developmental delays of children in with the addition of mu gua (*Fructus Chaenomelis Lagenariae*)
- With da fu pi (*Pericarpium Arecae catechu*) and fu ling pi (*Cortex Poriae cocos*) for mild edema 3

**REFERENCES**
3 Bensky, D, and Gamble, A.; Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica; Eastland Press, Seattle; 1993; p 162
Image plumdragonherbs.com
Cang Er Zi *Fructus Xanthii Sibiric*  
苍耳子

**Other names:** cocklebur fruit, xanthium,

**Plant description:** Fusiform or ovoid, 1-1.5 cm long, 4-7 mm in diameter. Externally yellowish-brown or yellowish-green, with hooked spines throughout. Summit with 2 relatively thick spines, separated or linked up, base with a fruit stalk scar. Texture hard and flexible, the centre of transverse section showing a septum and 2 loculi, each having an achene. Achene slightly fusiform, relatively even at one side, apex with a protruding remains of style, pericarp thin, grayish-black, with longitudinal wrinkle.¹

**Part used:** fruit

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Throughout China, especially Shandong, Jiangxi, Hubei, Jiangxi; harvested August to September once the fruit is ripe

**History:** The Divine Husbandman's Classic of Materia Medica

**Constituents:** xanthostrumarim, resin, alkaloids, ceryl alcohol, sitosterol, vitamin C

**Energetics, Properties and Channels Entered:** sweet, slightly bitter, warm and toxic, entering the lung meridian

**Actions and Indications:** antimicrobial, Anti-rheumatic, analgesic, antifungal, decongestant ²

**Medical Research:**
- *In vitro* inhibitory effect against *Staphylococcus aureus*
- Local application of cang er zi and sesame oil was used to treat 207 cases of chronic rhinitis, symptoms disappeared in all but 15 cases for as long as 3 years
- Intramuscular injections into points of pain of a 30% solution of cang er zi were 89% effective in treating lower back pain of various etiologies. Improvement was noticed after 1 treatment, but usually it took 3-4 treatments before being judged effective.³
- Lowering blood sugar, with similar mechanism as phenethyl biguanide ⁴

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:**
- Toxic ingredients are changed after decocting this herb or subjecting it to high heat. The lethal dosage for intraperitoneal injection in mice is 0.93 g/kg; symptoms included reduced movement and lowered reaction to outside stimuli, and irregular breathing, followed by difficulty in breathing and coma. Pathological examinations revealed
damage to all major organs, especially the liver and kidneys. Its chief poisonous component is rhamnose. The toxic effects in rats, guinea pigs and rabbits by different routes of administration are similar. LD50 is 0.93g/kg in mice.)

- Overdose can result in vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

**Medicinal uses:**
- Disperses wind and dispels dampness: for wind damp painful obstruction or skin disorders with itching
- Opens the nasal passages: for any nasal or sinus problem with a thick, viscous discharge and related headache
- Dispels exterior wind: as an auxiliary herb for exterior disorders with a splitting headache that radiates to the back of the neck.
- Most commonly used for dampness in the exterior

**Pharmacy and dosage:** 3-9g

**Major Combinations:**
- With xin yi hua (*Flos Magnoliae*) for headache and nasal obstruction; for acute wind heat patterns add shi gao (*gypsum*) and huang qin (*Radix Scutellariae Saicalensis*); for chronic wind heat add qian cao gen (*Radix Rubiae Cordifoliae*) and jin yin hua (*Flos Lonicerae Japonicae*); for allergic rhinitis add wu wei zi (*Fructus Rosae Laevegatae*)
- With wei ling xian (*Radix Clematidis*), chuang xiong (*Radix Ligustici Chuanxiong*) and cang zhu (*Rhizoma Atractylodis*) for pain and numbness due to wind damp painful obstruction
- With bai ji li (*Fructus Tribuli Terrestris*) internally and externally for wind rash or dampness induced sores

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