

MINT, HAPLOCALYX



Mentha haplocalyx [MEN-thuh]

Family: Labiatae

Names: Chinese mint, Bo He (Chinese)

Description: Perennial herb growing to 2 feet. Has a square stem, toothed oval leaves, and whorls of pale lilac flowers growing from the leaf axils. Has a sharper and more metholated flavor than culinary mint.

Cultivation: Corn Mint is native to temperate regions of the northern hemisphere and is

widely cultivated in China. Harvested 2-3 times a year, the best crops are in early summer and early autumn.

History: Bo he was first mentioned in *Grandfather Lei's Discussion of Herb Preparation* (AD 470). A 15th-century Chinese prescription recommended bo he for bloody dysentery.

Energetics: acrid, cool

Medicinal Uses: In Chinese herbal medicine bo he is a popular treatment for colds, sore throats, sore mouth and tongue, and a host of other conditions ranging from toothache to measles. Chinese herbalists believe this fragrant mint speeds recovery in diseases such as measles by bringing rashes to the skin's surface. Like peppermint, it helps to lower the temperature, has anticongestive properties and may be taken for dysentery and diarrhea. The juice has also been used to treat earache. Bo he is often combined with ju hua to treat headaches and bloodshot or sore eyes.

Combinations: a mixture with prunella is prescribed for inflammation of the eyes and swelling of the lymph nodes. A preparation prescribed for a sore, swollen throat combines field mint with platycodon and silkworm. Mixed with chrysanthemum flower (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*) to relieve headaches and other pains, as well as redness and swelling of the eyes. Practitioners warn against overcooking when preparing medicinal solutions of the mint; it is usually added to combinations five minutes before the cooking is finished.

Toxicity: Nursing mothers should not use this herb as it may cause insufficient production of milk.

References:

Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants.

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