

YIN CHEN HAO



Artemisia capillaries
[ar-te-MIZ-ee-uh]

Family: Compositae

Names: fragrant wormwood, oriental wormwood, Chinese Moxa Weed; In Chen, Kawara-Yomogi, Shih Yin Ch'En, Yin Ch'En, Yin Ch'En Chiu, Yin Ch'En Hao

Description: Medium-sized, much-branched subshrub with purple stems and finely divided, aromatic silky leaves. Panicles of minute, purple-brown flowers. Height and width 1-3 feet. Hardy in zone 9. It is in flower from August to October, and the seeds ripen from September to October. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Wind.

Cultivation: Native to Southeast Asia, yin chen hao is cultivated in China and other Far Eastern countries. An easily grown plant, succeeding in a well-drained circumneutral or slightly alkaline loamy soil, preferring a sunny

position. Established plants are drought tolerant. Plants are longer lived, more hardy and more aromatic when they are grown in a poor dry soil. It tolerates temperatures down to at least 15°F. Plants in this genus are notably resistant to honey fungus. Members of this genus are rarely if ever troubled by browsing deer.

Seed is surface sown from late winter to early summer in a greenhouse. When large enough to handle, prick the seedlings out into individual pots and plant them out in the summer. Cuttings of half-ripe wood, July/August in a frame. Division in spring or autumn. The young plants are gathered in spring.

History: Yin chen hao has been used in Chinese herbal medicine for more than 2,000 years. Its medicinal properties were first listed in the 1st-centuryAD *Divine Husbandman's Classic*.

Constituents: Contains a volatile oil and coumarins. The volatile oil is antifungal.

Properties: bitter, aromatic, diuretic, Antibacterial; Anticholesterolemic; Antiviral; Cholagogue; Febrifuge; Hepatic; Vasodilator. Antipyretic, antimicrobial, lowers both cholesterol and blood pressure

Energetics: bitter, neutral

Meridians/Organs affected: spleen, stomach, liver, gall bladder

Medicinal Uses: Yin chen hao is an effective remedy for liver problems, being specifically helpful for treating hepatitis with jaundice. Traditional Chinese medicine holds that it is

bitter and cooling, clearing “damp heat” from the liver and gall ducts and relieving fevers. Yin chen hao is also anti-inflammatory and diuretic. It was formerly used in a plaster for headaches. Research indicates that yin chen hao has a tonic and strengthening effect on the liver and gallbladder and digestive system. It is an effective remedy for liver problems, being specifically helpful in treating hepatitis with jaundice. An infusion of the young shoots is used internally in the treatment of jaundice, hepatitis, gall bladder complaints and feverish illnesses. Externally it has been applied in the form of a plaster for treating headaches.

TCM:

Indications: For internal damp heat with symptoms of hepatitis, jaundice, gallbladder inflammation, and gallstone attack. (Pulse: Deep and rapid or slippery and rapid. Tongue: A yellow greasy coat.)

Dosage: 9-15 grams

Combination: Capillaris Combination (Yin Chen Hao Tang): 10 grams of capillaris, 6 grams of gardenia fruit, and 6 grams of rhubarb.

Toxicity: Do not take during pregnancy. Unsuitable for children under 12 unless prescribed professionally. Capillaris should not be used when there is jaundice caused by qi deficiency with no signs of damp heat.

Culinary Uses: Leaves and stems are soaked and boiled.

References:

Chinese Herbal Medicine, Daniel P Reid, Shambhala, 1987; ISBN: 0-87773-398-8
The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants
Plants for a Future Database

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