

## LEVANT WORMSEED



***Artemisia cina***

[ar-te-MIZ-ee-uh]

**Family:** Compositae

**Names:** Santonica, wormseed, levant wormwood, Centonique, Chamomile-leaved Artemisi, Horasani, Sea Wormwood; He-Shi (Chinese)

**Description:** Shrubby perennial with long, thin leaves and tiny, round tufts of flowers. Native to the region stretching from the eastern Mediterranean to Siberia. The flowers are hermaphrodite and are pollinated by the wind. Taste is bitter, the odor is aromatic.

**Cultivation:** Easily grown in a well-drained circumneutral or slightly alkaline loamy soil, preferring a sunny position. Established plants are very drought tolerant. Plants are longer lived, more hardy and more aromatic when they are grown in a poor dry soil. Plants in this

genus are notably resistant to honey fungus. Members of this genus are rarely if ever troubled by browsing deer. Seed - surface sow 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 seeds are collected in the fall.

**History:** Levant wormwood was known to the classical Greek world as a remedy for intestinal worms and has been used for this purpose ever since. Its active constituent, santonin, was first isolated in 1930 and is now more commonly employed than the plant itself.

**Constituents:** volatile oil, containing 1,8-cineole as the major component, up to about 80%, with terpineol and carvacrol; sesquiterpene lactone (santonin), volatile oil, artemisin

**Properties:** anthelmintic, carminative, stomachic, emmenagogue, narcotic

**Energetics:** bitter, aromatic, warm

**Meridians/Organs affected:** colon, liver, stomach

**Medicinal Uses:** Vermifuge. Santonin is particularly active against round-worms, and to some extent against threadworms. Wormseed has been taken combined with honey or treacle or as a decoction, it must be used with care as high doses are toxic.

**Dosage:** Take 3-10 drops of the oil mixed with honey three times a day for three or four days.

Alternatively, the whole seeds can be crushed and taken in half-teaspoonful doses mixed with honey. This should be followed by an herbal laxative such as cascara bark.

*Homeopathy:* The dried flowers are used to make a homeopathic remedy. This is particularly useful for complaints of the nervous system and the digestive tract. A homeopathic remedy made from the plant is used to rid children of worms.

**Toxicity:** Due to the potency and to a low-level toxicity of santonin, this herb should only be used under medical supervision. Due not take during pregnancy and not suitable for children under 12 unless prescribed professionally

**References:**

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The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Andrew Chevallier, Dorling Kindersley, 1997; ISBN: 0-7894-1067-2

Planetary Herbology, Michael Tierra, Lotus Press, 1978; ISBN: 0-941-52427-2

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