

HOLISTIC HERBALISM ADVANCED CLINICAL PROGRAM MATERIA MEDICA

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| Common Name | White Peony |
| Latin | Paeonia lactiflora (or P. albiflora) |
| Family | Paeoniaceae |
| Other Known Names | Bai Shao Yao (Chinese) |
| Energy | Cold, dry |
| Taste | Bitter, sour |
| Part Used | Root cortex with the bark removed |
| Location | It is native to China and grows in Zhejiang, Anhui and Sichuan provinces. |
| Gathering | Harvest the 4-5 year-old roots in autumn, the roots are boiled, the outer bark is removed and the roots are sliced and dried. |
| Cultivation | It is a common garden plant and prefers full sun and well-drained soil. |

| HERBAL ACTION | TISSUE AFFINITY | MAJOR CONSTITUENTS |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Analgesic | Female Reproductive System | Monoterpenes -anti-inflammatory |
| Antibacterial | Blood/Xue | Paeonin |
| Anti-inflammatory | Chinese Liver | Paeoniflorin-neuroprotective, analgesic |
| Antioxidant | Nervous System | Oxypaeoniflorin |
| Antispasmodic | Brain | Paeonilactones A,B, C |
| Cerebral Stimulant | Musculoskeletal System | Paeonol (phenolic)-anti-inflammatory |
| Hepatoprotective (mild) | Large Intestine | Albiflorin (coumarin)-myeloprotective |
| Neuroprotective | HPA axis | Neolignans -neuroprotective |
| Nootropic | | |
| Sedative | | |
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SPECIFIC INDICATIONS

Extinguishes wind, blood/xue tonic/antispasmodic
 Deficient blood with impaired memory.
 Deficient liver blood with menstrual or menopausal symptoms.
 Muscle spasms caused by liver wind.
 Controls excessive sweating.

PRIMARY USES

- White Peony nourishes the blood. It is used for deficient liver blood and yin patterns such as anemia, PMS symptomology, dysmenorrhea, irregular uterine bleeding, uterine fibroids, endometriosis and irregular periods.
- Because Bai Shao Yao builds blood and is a cerebral stimulant it is useful for menopausal brain fog, as well as poor memory, with potential for Alzheimer's disease.
- Bai Shao can be useful for liver wind pain associated with disharmonious liver qi.
- White Peony can be used to treat spasms, cramping, flank or chest pain, rectal spasm, torticollis trigeminal neuralgia, restless leg syndrome, mild Tourette's Syndrome, intermittent claudication, abdominal or intestinal cramping and petit mal seizures.
- Bai Shao helps clear liver fire patterns such as headaches with red eyes or ears, hypertension, excess/heat migraines and vertigo
- White Peony is employed for what the Eclectic physicians called muscular arthralgia. Today this is more commonly known as fibromyalgia.
- Bai Shao Yao normalizes sweating. It can be used for excessive sweating, including night sweats, sweaty palms or feet or excessive menopausal sweating.

FORMULA COMBINATIONS

- Combine White Peony along with Licorice, Chaste Tree and Saw Palmetto for polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). A low glycemic / metabolic diet must be followed in tandem and insulin resistance must be treated.
- Bai Shao can address cystic breast disease when combined with Cleavers, Red Clover and Figwort
- Bai Shao is one of the four ingredients in the classic TCM formula Women's Four Herb Tea (Si Wu Tang) combined with Dang Gui, Chuan Xiong and Shu Di Huang.
- For fibroid and ovarian cysts, use Si Wu Tang with Dan Shen/Salvia miltiorrhiza, Cinnamon and Tree Peony/Mu Dan Pi.
- For impaired cerebral function combine with Bacopa, standardized Ginkgo, Holy Basil or Rosemary.
- For petit mal seizures combine it with Scullcap, Bacopa, Blue Vervain, and Lobelia.
- For liver fire headaches combine Bai Shao with Feverfew, St. John's wort, Kudzu/Ge Gen, Corydalis/Yan Hu Suo.
- For hypertension White Peony can be combined with Chrysanthemum/Ju Hua, Motherwort, Olive leaf and Baikal Scullcap.
- For muscle pain with heat (inflammation) and blood deficiency use Paeonia with Black Cohosh, Ashwagandha and Achyranthes/Huai Niu Xi.
- Excessive menopausal sweating can be addressed by combining Bai Shao with Astragalus and Sage.
- Bai Shao also be used for a lack of normal perspiration when combined with Astragalus.
- Bai Shao can be of benefit for angina when combined with cardiogenic herbs such as Hawthorn, Corydalis or Dan Shen/Salvia miltiorrhiza.

DOSAGE

Tea (Decoction): 2 – 5 gram. dried root per 250 ml water, decoct 10-15 minutes, steep covered 45 minutes take 100 ml 3x per day

Tincture (1:4 or 1:5), 60% ETOH Dose: 1.5-2.5 mL (30-50 gtt.) TID

White Peony root comprises .5 – 2 parts of a formula (In cases of highly sensitive people you use less)

PREPARATIONS

Stir-fried brown increases its effect on the blood by nourishing the yin.

Stir-fired in yellow rice wine (Jiu Bai Shao) enhances circulation and relieves pain.

In addition to being a major component of Si Wu Tang, Peony is used in many other TCM formulas including Shao Yao Gan Cao Tang (Peony and Licorice combination) used for muscle spasms and Zhishi Shao Yao San (bitter Orange peel and Peony combination) used for abdominal pain.

CONTRAINDICATIONS & DRUG INTERACTIONS

Do not use while pregnant, breast feeding or with post-partum bleeding due to unknown effects.

It is contraindicated for abdominal coldness with diarrhea or damp spleen symptoms.

In China a combination of Paeonia and Licorice has been used to treat cisplatin-induced diarrhea.

There is a theoretical possibility of White Peony potentiating sedatives, antiseizure or antispasmodic medications, as well as Warfarin.

Most Chinese herbs that are white (like White Peony root) are heavily sulfated to prevent yellowing.

Avoid sulfated herbs in people with asthma (and in general).

SPECIAL NOTES OF CONSIDERATION

Japanese name: Byakushaku

Korean name: Paekchak

Red Peony (Chi Shao) and White Peony come from the same plant. The White Peony has the outer cortex removed. Chi Shao is used to nourish the blood and remove stagnation (dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea), it clears heat in the blood and liver fire symptoms (red, painful eyes, ocular migraines).

Western species of Peony have similar known properties of anti-spasmodic and anti-inflammatory actions. Both *Paeonia brownii* and *P. californica* are referenced with the later more commonly found throughout the western US.

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

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