

# Introduction to Herbology

Herbs that Tonify Qi  
Herbs that Tonify Blood  
Herbs that Tonify Yang  
Herbs that Tonify Yin

## Herbs that Tonify Qi

Most disorders of qi deficiency involve the Spleen or the Lungs, as these are the two sources of post-natal qi.

- **Spleen Qi Xu:** lethargy, weak extremities, poor appetite, abdominal pain, loose stools, diarrhea
- **Lung Qi Xu:** S.O.B, weak voice, pale complexion, spontaneous sweating
- **Heart Qi Xu:** irregular pulse, palpitation

When Spleen qi is deficient, the Spleen may fail to transform fluids resulting in edema and fluid retention.

When the Spleen is deficient, it may fail in its function to raise the clear yang, result in certain “sinking” conditions, such as organ prolapse.

# Herbs that Tonify Qi

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Taste:</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sweet</li></ul>                                                                                                       |
| <b>Temperature:</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• warm</li></ul>                                                                                                        |
| <b>Channels:</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LU, SP</li></ul>                                                                                                      |
| <b>Cautions &amp; Contraindications:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These herbs are sweet and rich</li><li>• Excessive or chronic use may cause fullness in chest or heat signs</li></ul> |
| <b>Main Action:</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tonify qi of the Spleen and Lung</li></ul>                                                                            |
| <b>Other:</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Combine with herbs that move or regulate qi to prevent stagnation (e.g. chen pi, mu xiang, sha ren)</li></ul>         |

## rén shēn *ginseng radix*

**Temp:** slightly warm

**Taste:** sweet, slightly bitter

**Channels:** LU, SP

**Dosage:** 3-9 grams (cook separately in double boiler)



### 1. tonifies qi

- tonifies Spleen qi
- tonifies Lung qi
- tonifies Heart qi
- tonifies original qi; for qi collapse

### 2. generates fluids and alleviates thirst

- for wasting and thirsting disorder
- for febrile diseases where both the qi and fluids have been damaged



# Herbs that Tonify Blood

Signs and Symptoms of blood deficiency:

- Menstruation problems (e.g. painful, scanty, or delayed menses)
- Pale, dry skin
- Eyes issues (e.g. blurred vision, floaters)
- Poor memory, poor concentration, anxiety, insomnia
- Skin sensation problems (tingling, numbness)
- Dizziness
- Pale dry tongue
- Thin, deficient, or choppy pulse

Blood deficiency may also lead to internal wind.

Herbs in this category tend to be sticky and cloying, and may cause middle-jiao problems.

## Herbs that Tonify Blood

|                                          |                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Taste:</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sweet</li></ul>                                                                   |
| <b>Temperature:</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• warm</li></ul>                                                                    |
| <b>Channels:</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LV, SP, HT</li></ul>                                                              |
| <b>Cautions &amp; Contraindications:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These herbs are sweet and cloying; overuse can cause digestive problems</li></ul> |
| <b>Main Action:</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tonify blood and nourish yin</li></ul>                                            |
| <b>Other:</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Combine with herbs that move or regulate qi to prevent stagnation</li></ul>       |

# shú dì huáng

*rehmanniae radix preparata*

**Temp:** slightly warm  
**Taste:** sweet  
**Channels:** HT, KI, LV  
**Dosage:** 9-30 grams

1. tonifies blood
2. tonifies Liver and Kidney yin
3. tonifies Kidney jing
  - for delayed development, premature aging, etc.

Shu Di Huang is prepared by soaking it in alcohol and then steaming it.  
It is very sticky and cloying, and may cause digestive problems. If this occurs, it can be combined with herbs like Chen Pi, Mu Xiang, or Sha Ren.

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地  
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# Herbs that Tonify Yang

Signs and Symptoms of Kidney yang deficiency:

- Low back and knee pain
- Urination problems
- Tinnitus
- Sexual problems and infertility problems
- OB/GYN and menstrual problems
- Watery, thin, early-morning diarrhea with undigested food
- Deep pulse
- Pale (blue) tongue, swollen, wet, teeth marks

These herbs are commonly combined with Herbs that Warm the Interior.

Many of these herbs tonify Kidney Yin as well.

Some of these herbs can treat respiratory problems by strengthening the Kidney so that it can grasp descending Lung qi.

**Caution:** These herbs are warm and acrid, and may cause heat signs if used longterm.

## More Signs of Kidney Yang Deficiency:

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- **Sinews and Bones:** lack of strength in sinews and bones, cold and aching low back and knees, feeble gait
- **Reproductive Function:** poor libido, impotence, infertility, leakage of essence (seminal emission, premature ejaculation)
- **Fluid Metabolism:** frequent urination, increased nighttime urination, enuresis and incontinence, water swelling, inhibited urination
- **Spleen:** When Kidney yang is deficient, it can fail to warm the Spleen, giving rise to loose stool or early-morning diarrhea
- **Insecurity of Ren and Chong:** flooding and spotting, clear thin vaginal discharge
- **Failure to Grasp Lung Qi:** asthma, wheezing, shortness of breath, exhaling more than inhaling
- **Kidney Essence:** delayed development in children (slowness to talk, slowness to teethe, delayed closing of fontanel) or signs of premature aging in adults (greying of hair, deafness, tinnitus, flowery vision, wilting sinew and bones)

## Herbs that Tonify Yang

|                                          |                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Taste:</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sweet</li></ul>                                                                      |
| <b>Temperature:</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• warm</li></ul>                                                                       |
| <b>Channels:</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• KI, SP, HT</li></ul>                                                                 |
| <b>Cautions &amp; Contraindications:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These herbs are warm and acrid; they may cause heat signs if used longterm</li></ul> |
| <b>Main Action:</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tonify Kidney, Spleen, Heart yang (mostly Kidney)</li></ul>                          |
| <b>Other:</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Often combined with <i>Herbs that Warm the Interior</i></li></ul>                    |

## lù róng

*cervi cornu pantotrichum*

**Temp:** warm

**Taste:** sweet, salty

**Channels:** KI, LV

**Dosage:** 1-2 grams (pill or powder)

### 1. tonifies Kidney yang

- fatigue, cold extremities, weak low back and knees, copious urination, impotence
- stabilizes Ren and Chong; for uterine bleeding, vaginal discharge, infertility with cold womb

### 2. tonifies Kidney essence

- strengthens tendon and bone
  - for bi syndrome, wei (atrophy) syndrome, delayed development in children
- heals long-standing sores and wounds

Lu Rong is best taken in herbal wine, or swallowed as a pill or powder with decoction.

Overtaking Lu Rong can lead to heat signs, such as palpitations, headache, bloodshot eyes, and nosebleed.

鹿茸



# Herbs that Tonify Yin

These herbs tonify the yin of the Lung, Stomach, Liver, and Kidney; they also generate fluids to moisten dryness.

**Lung Yin Deficiency:**

- dry cough, loss of voice, thirst, dry throat, dry skin, coughing up thick sputum

**Stomach Yin Deficiency:**

- lack of appetite, irritability, thirst, dry mouth, constipation

**Liver Yin Deficiency:**

- diminished visual acuity, dry eyes, night blindness, dizziness, tinnitus, dry nails, low-grade sensation of heat
- vertigo, dizziness, tinnitus, dry mouth and throat, insomnia (Liver yang rising)

**Kidney Yin Deficiency:**

- dizziness, tinnitus, weak low back and legs, warm palms and soles, afternoon fever, scanty and dark urine

**Tongue:** red with little or no coat

**Pulse:** thin, rapid

# Herbs that Tonify Yin

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Taste:</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sweet</li></ul>                                                                                             |
| <b>Temperature:</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• cold</li></ul>                                                                                              |
| <b>Channels:</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LU, ST, LV, KI</li></ul>                                                                                    |
| <b>Main Action:</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• tonify yin, moisten dryness</li></ul>                                                                       |
| <b>Cautions/<br/>Contraindications</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These herbs are cold, sweet, sticky, and cloying. They can easily obstruct the Spleen and Stomach</li></ul> |

# mài mén dōng

*ophiopogonis radix*

**Temp:** slightly cold

**Taste:** sweet, slightly bitter

**Channels:** HT, LU, ST

**Dosage:** 6-15 grams

## 1. tonifies Lung yin

- for dry cough, cough with thick phlegm, or coughing up blood

## 2. tonifies Stomach yin

- for dry mouth and dry tongue

## 3. clears Heart heat

- for irritability and fever that worsens at night

## 4. moistens Large Intestine

- for constipation due to dryness

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冬

