

HERBS THE DRAIN FIRE

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Sources:

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Herbs that Drain Fire

These are among the coldest herbs in the materia medica.

- High fever
- Irritability
- Thirst
- Delirium
- Eye problems

These symptoms generally correspond to the **Qi level** in the four levels of Warm Disease Theory, or to the **Yang Ming** level in the six-stage Shang Han Lun theory.

The key symptoms associated with these levels are the **Four Bigs (四大)**: big fever, big thirst, big sweat, big pulse.

Because they clear heat, these herbs tend to be bitter in flavor. Some, due to their ability to moisten dryness and generate fluids, are also sweet.

Because these herbs are so cold, caution must be taken not to damage the Spleen.

Herbs that Drain Fire

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter• sometimes sweet (moistening)
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU, ST, HT, LV
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are cold and bitter; they may damage the Spleen
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear heat and drain fire
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs treat Qi level or Yangming level heat, characterized by the Four Bigs

Herbs that Drain Fire

- shí gāo
- zhī mǔ
- zhī zǐ
- dàn zhú yè
- xià kū cǎo
- xī guā
- tiān huā fēn
- lú gēn
- juē míng zǐ

shí gāo

gypsum fibrosum

Temp: very cold
Taste: sweet, acrid
Channels: LU, ST
Dosage: 15-60 grams

石
膏

1. clears heat and drains fire

- for qi-level or Yang Ming heat characterized by the “Four Great” symptoms: great fever (without chills), great sweat, great thirst, big pulse (rapid, surging)

2. clears excess heat from the Lung

- for cough with thick, yellow, sticky sputum

3. clears blazing Stomach fire

- for hunger, thirst, bad breath
- for headache, toothache, painful gums, mouth sores

Prepared Shi Gao (called Shu Shi Gao) can be applied topically to treat skin conditions such as eczema, burns, and sores.



zhī mǔ

anemarrhenae rhizoma

Temp: cold
Taste: bitter, sweet
Channels: LU, ST, KI
Dosage: 6-12 grams

知
母

1. clears heat and drains fire

- for high fever, irritability, thirst, rapid flooding pulse (qi-level heat)

2. clears heat from deficiency

- for heat signs due to Kidney yin deficiency

3. tonifies Kidney yin and moistens dryness



Zhi Mu means “know your mother.”

zhī zǐ

gardeniae fructus

Temp: cold
Taste: bitter
Channels: HT, LU, ST, LV, SJ
Dosage: 6-9 grams

梔子

1. clears heat and drains fire

- clears heat from all three jiao; for heat anywhere in the body
- treats shen disorders due to heat (irritability, insomnia, delirious speech)

2. clears damp-heat

- for lin syndrome due to damp-heat in the lower-jiao, jaundice

3. cools blood to stop bleeding

- for nosebleed, vomiting blood, blood in the stool or urine
- use charred (Zhi Zi Tan)

4. use topically for injury and trauma



dàn zhú yè

lophatheri herba

Temp: cold
Taste: sweet, bland
Channels: HT, SI, ST
Dosage: 6-9 grams

淡竹叶

1. clears Heart heat

- for shen problems (anxiety, irritability, insomnia, palpitations), difficult urination, and mouth sores

2. promotes urination to treat Lin syndrome

- for Heart heat pouring into Small Intestine



xià kū cǎo

prunellae spica

Temp: cold
Taste: bitter, acrid
Channels: LV, GB
Dosage: 9-15 grams

1. clears Liver heat and brightens eyes
 - for red, painful, swollen eyes; headache; dizziness
2. clears heat and dissipates nodules
 - for neck lumps, scrofula, goiter, lipoma, or swollen glands due to phlegm-heat
3. lowers high blood pressure



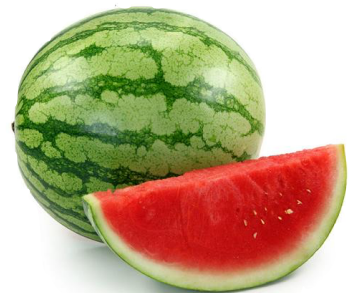
夏
枯
草

xī guā

citrulli fructus

Temp: cold
Taste: sweet (bland)
Channels: UB, HT, ST
Dosage: 15-30 grams

1. clears heat and summerheat
 - for thirst, dark scanty urine, dry heaving
2. generates body fluids
3. promotes urination
 - for edema and jaundice



西
瓜

Xi Gua is watermelon. It is used as food therapy, not in decoction.
Watermelon rind is called Xi Gua Pi. The rind is not as cooling, but better at promoting urination.

tiān huā fēn

tricosanthis radix

Temp: cold
Taste: bitter, slightly sweet
Channels: LU, ST
Dosage: 10-15 grams

1. clears heat from Lung and Stomach
 - for thirst, irritability, cough with thick or blood-streaked phlegm
2. generates body fluids
 - a.k.a. tonifies Lung and Stomach yin
3. resolves toxicity and expels pus
 - for carbuncles and sores with yellow, sticky, foul-smelling pus
 - for breast abscess



天
花
分

lú gēn

phragmitis rhizoma

Temp: cold
Taste: sweet
Channels: LU, ST
Dosage: 15-30 grams

1. clears heat from Lung and Stomach
 - for thirst, irritability, cough with thick or blood-streaked phlegm
2. generates body fluids
 - a.k.a. tonifies Lung and Stomach yin
 - stronger than Tian Hua Fen
3. promotes urination to treat Lin syndrome
 - for urgent, scanty, dark, painful urination



芦
根

juē míng zǐ

cassiae semen

Temp: slightly cold
Taste: bitter, sweet, salty
Channels: LV, LI, KI
Dosage: 9-15 grams

1. clears Liver heat to brighten eyes
 - for eye problems, headache, dizziness
2. moistens Large Intestine
3. lowers high blood pressure and cholesterol

Jue Ming Zi is named after abalone shell (Shi Jue Ming) because of its strong action of brightening the eyes. It is mainly for eye problems due to Liver yang rising, but it can be used with other herbs for eye problems due to wind-heat or yin deficiency (hence its sweet nature).



决
明
子

lián zǐ xīn

plumula nelumbinis

Temp: cold
Taste: bitter
Channels: HT, PC
Dosage: 1.5-3 grams

1. clears Heart heat
 - for shen problems, confusion, delirium, irritability, insomnia
 - for sores on the mouth and tongue
2. stops bleeding and secures essence
 - for vomiting blood or spermatorrhea

Lian Zi Xin can be taken as a single herb for insomnia due to Heart heat. It is used as a folk remedy for childhood insomnia by making it into a pillow.

连
子
心

Summary

shi gao
gypsum fibrosum

clears heat and drains fire

- Qi-level heat
- Lung and Stomach heat

zhi mu
anemarrhenae rhizoma

clears heat and drains fire

- Qi-level heat

- clears deficiency heat
- tonifies KI yin

zhi zi
gardeniae fructus

clears heat and drains fire

- all three jiao
- for shen disturbance

- clears damp-heat (in syndrome and jaundice)

dan zhu ye
lophatheri herba

clears heat and drains fire

- clears Heart heat

- promotes urination

xia ku cao
prunellae spica

clears heat and drains fire

- clears Liver heat to brighten eyes

- dissipates nodules
- lowers high blood pressure

xi gua
citrulli fructus

clears heat and drains fire

- clears summerheat

- generates body fluid
- promotes urination

tian hua fen
trichosanthis radix

clears heat and drains fire

- clears heat from Lung and Stomach

- moistens Lung; generates body fluids
- treats skin infection (sores with pus)

lu gen
phragmitis rhizoma

clears heat and drains fire

- clears heat from Lung and Stomach

- Moistens Lung; generates body fluids
- promotes urination

jue ming zi
cassiae semen

clears heat and drains fire

- clears Liver heat to brighten eyes

- moistens Large Intestine
- lowers high blood pressure and cholesterol