

# HERBS THAT COOL THE BLOOD

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**Sources:**

- Bensky, D. (2004). *Chinese Herbal Medicine: Materia Medica*. Seattle, WA: Eastland Press. pp. 118-130
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## Herbs that Cool the Blood

- These herbs are cold, and either bitter and sweet or salty
- They clear heat from the ying (nutritive) level or xue (blood) level with symptoms such as:
  - Irritability, restlessness, insomnia, delirium
  - Bleeding (nosebleed, vomiting blood, coughing blood, blood in the urine or stool)
  - Maculopapular rashes (flat red area with small bumps)
  - Scarlet tongue, possibly dry or with prickles
- Because heat at the blood level tends to damage yin and exhaust fluids, many of these herbs generate fluids as well

## Herbs that Cool the Blood

<b>Taste:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bitter and sweet</li><li>• salty</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>• LV, HT</li></ul>
<b>Cautions &amp; Contraindications:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These herbs are cold and bitter; they may damage the Spleen</li></ul>
<b>Main Action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear heat from the Ying and Xue levels</li></ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Because heat at the blood level can damage yin, some of these herbs are sweet and nourish fluids</li></ul>

## Herbs that Cool the Blood

- xī jiǎo
- shuǐ niú jiǎo
- shēng dì huáng
- xuán shēn
- mǔ dān pí
- zǐ cǎo

xī jiǎo

*rhinocerotis cornu*

**Temp:** cold

**Taste:** bitter, salty

**Channels:** HT, LV, ST

**Dosage:** 1.5-6 grams (or swallow 0.5-2 grams as powder with decoction)

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1. clears heat and cools blood

- for ying (nutritive) or xue (blood) level heat

2. clears Heart heat

- for shen disturbance due to heat, e.g. delirium, mania, loss of consciousness

3. clears heat and stops tremors

- for convulsions due to heat

Xi Jiao is rhinoceros horn. It is no longer used. Shui Niu Jiao is used as a substitute.

**shuǐ niú jiǎo**

*bubali cornu*

**Temp:** cold

**Taste:** bitter, salty

**Channels:** HT, LV, ST

**Dosage:** 30-120 grams (or swallow 6-15 grams as powder with decoction)

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1. clears heat and cools blood

- for ying (nutritive) or xue (blood) level heat

2. clears Heart heat

- for shen disturbance due to heat, e.g. delirium, mania, loss of consciousness

3. clears heat and stops tremors

- for convulsions due to heat

Shui Niu Jiao is used as a substitute for Xi Jiao. Its dosage is much higher.

# shēng dì huáng

## *rehmanniae radix*

**Temp:** cold  
**Taste:** bitter, sweet  
**Channels:** HT, KI, LV  
**Dosage:** 9-15 grams

1. clears heat and cools blood
  - for heat in the ying or xue level
    - high fever, thirst, scarlet tongue, bleeding, etc.
2. nourishes yin and generates fluids
  - for thirst, dry mouth, constipation

Sheng Di Huang is very sticky and cloying and may cause middle-jiao upset, such as nausea, diarrhea, or abdominal pain. It is often combined with Chen Pi or Sha Ren to avoid these side effects.

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# xuán shēn

## *scrophulariae radix*

**Temp:** cold  
**Taste:** salty, sweet, bitter  
**Channels:** KI, LU, ST  
**Dosage:** 9-15 grams

1. clears heat and cools blood
2. nourishes yin and generates fluids
  - esp. for aftermath of warm disease with symptoms such as dry cough, constipation, and irritability
3. softens hardness and dissipates nodules
  - for throat pain, throat swelling, and lumps in the neck such as goiter and **scrofula**

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# mǔ dān pí

## *moutan cortex*

**Temp:** slightly cold  
**Taste:** acrid, bitter  
**Channels:** HT, LV, KI  
**Dosage:** 6-12 grams

1. clears heat and cools blood
  - for bleeding due to heat at the xue level
  - for frequent or profuse menstruation due to blood heat
2. invigorates blood
  - esp. for amenorrhea, fibroids, abdominal masses due to blood stasis
3. clears heat
  - clears ascending Liver heat → headache, eye pain, flank pain, dysmenorrhea
  - clears deficiency heat → lingering heat after febrile disease, steaming bone disorder
  - drains pus and reduces swelling → non-draining sores (topical), Large Intestine abscess

Mu Dan Pi is special because it is cool and also invigorates blood (most blood-moving herbs are warm).  
Use caution during pregnancy or excessive menstrual bleeding not due to heat and stasis.

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# zǐ cǎo

## *arnebiae/lithospermi radix*

**Temp:** cold  
**Taste:** sweet, (salty)  
**Channels:** HT, LV  
**Dosage:** 3-9 grams

1. cools blood and invigorates blood
  - for skin eruptions and rashes due to fire toxin (dark purple rashes)
  - not as strong as Mu Dan Pi
2. moistens Large Intestine and promotes urination
3. treats damp-heat skin problems
  - applied topically for damp-heat related lesions, vaginal itching, burns, sores, diaper rash

Zi Cao can be used externally. Soak in oil for several weeks, then apply oil with cotton ball.

Shiunko (aka Zi Yun Gao, aka Purple Cloud Ointment), a burn cream used in Japanese moxibustion, is made from Dang Gui and Zi Cao mixed with sesame oil and beeswax.

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# Summary

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**shui niu jiao**  
*bubali cornu*

clears heat and cools blood  
• heat in ying and xue levels

**sheng di huang**  
*rehmanniae radix*

clears heat and cools blood  
• heat in ying and xue levels

• nourish yin and generates fluids

**xuan shen**  
*scrophulariae radix*

clears heat and cools blood  
• heat in ying and xue levels

• nourish yin and generates fluids  
• softens hardness (scrofula)

**mu dan pi**  
*moutan cortex*

clears heat and cools blood  
• heat in xue level  
• good for OB/GYN conditions

• cools blood and invigorates blood  
• clears heat (deficiency heat, Liver heat)

**zi cao**  
*lithospermi radix*

clears heat and cools blood  
• skin problems