

# HERBS THAT RELIEVE COUGHING AND WHEEZING

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**Sources:**

- Bensky, D. (2004). *Chinese Herbal Medicine: Materia Medica*. Seattle, WA: Eastland Press. pp. 437-462
- Chen, J. and Chen, T. (2004). *Chinese Medical Herbology and Pharmacology*. Art of Medicine Press. pp. 682-749

## Herbs that Relieve Coughing and Wheezing

Herbs in this category stop cough, but do not necessarily transform phlegm.

These herbs treat the **branch symptoms**. To treat the root cause, they must be combined with other herbs.

For example, for cough due to an exterior attack, they are combined with herbs that release the exterior. For cough due to deficiency, they are combined with tonifying herbs. For cough due to heat, they are combined with heat-clearing herbs.

## Herbs that Relieve Coughing and Wheezing

<b>Taste:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• acrid/bitter/sweet</li></ul>
<b>Temperature:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• warm or cold</li></ul>
<b>Channels:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LU</li></ul>
<b>Main Action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stop cough</li></ul>
<b>Other:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These herbs treat branch symptoms only. Combine with other herbs to treat the root.</li></ul>

## Herbs that Relieve Coughing and Wheezing

- xìng rén
- zǐ wǎn
- kuǎn dōng huā
- zǐ sū zǐ
- pí pa yè
- bǎi bù
- sāng bái pí
- mǎ dōu líng

# xìng rén

## *armenicae semen*

**Temp:** slightly warm  
**Taste:** bitter, slightly toxic  
**Channels:** LU, LI  
**Dosage:** 3-9 grams

杏  
仁

1. stops cough and wheezing
2. moistens Large Intestine to gently relieve constipation

- Due to its cyanogenic glycoside content, this herb is toxic.
- 10-20 seeds is toxic for children; 40-60 seeds for adults. 50-120 seeds can cause death.
- Peeled seeds are less toxic than unpeeled seeds. Cooked seeds are less toxic than raw seeds.
- That being said, no toxic side effects are expected within the normal dosage range. Apricot kernels are used widely in food and candy in China.



# zǐ wǎn

## *asteris radix*

**Temp:** slightly warm  
**Taste:** bitter, acrid  
**Channels:** LU  
**Dosage:** 5-9 grams

紫  
菀

1. stops cough and transforms phlegm
  - for cough due to wind-heat, wind-cold, or Lung deficiency



# kuǎn dōng huā

*farfarae flos*

**Temp:** warm

**Taste:** acrid

**Channels:** LU

**Dosage:** 4.5-9 grams

## 1. moistens Lung to stop cough

- for cough due to wind-heat, wind-cold, or Lung deficiency
- commonly used in combination with Zi Wan
- Zi Wan has a stronger downward action (it is bitter);  
Kuan Dong Hua has a stronger moistening action



款  
冬  
花

# zǐ sū zǐ

*perillae fructus*

**Temp:** warm

**Taste:** acrid

**Channels:** LU, LI

**Dosage:** 3-9 grams

## 1. stops cough and transforms cold phlegm

- for cough and wheezing with copious phlegm
- esp. when exhalation is more difficult than inhalation or there is  
a stifling sensation in the chest

## 2. moistens Large Intestine to gently relieve constipation



紫  
苏  
子

Zi Su Ye is perilla leaf. Zi Su Zi is perilla seed.

# pí pa yè

## *eriobotryae folium*

**Temp:** neutral (slightly cold)

**Taste:** bitter

**Channels:** LU, ST

**Dosage:** 6-15 grams

1. clears heat, transforms phlegm, and stops cough
  - for cough due to Lung heat or Lung dryness
2. clears Stomach heat and directs rebellious qi downward
  - for nausea, vomiting, hiccup, belching due to Stomach heat



枇  
杷  
叶

# bǎi bù

## *stemonaе radix*

**Temp:** slightly warm

**Taste:** sweet, bitter

**Channels:** LU

**Dosage:** 3-9 grams

1. moistens Lung to stop cough
  - for both acute and chronic cough
  - for cough due to Lung yin deficiency
  - for Lung tuberculosis
2. kills parasites
  - used internally and externally for pinworms
  - used externally for lice or fleas
  - used as wash for bacterial vaginosis



百  
部

# sāng bái pí

## *mori cortex*

**Temp:** cold  
**Taste:** sweet  
**Channels:** LU  
**Dosage:** 6-15 grams

1. clears Lung heat to stop cough
  - for cough and wheezing due to Lung heat
2. promotes urination to treat edema
  - for superficial edema, facial edema, swelling of extremities
3. lowers high blood pressure
  - mild but long-lasting



桑  
白  
皮

# mǎ dōu líng

## *aristolochiae fructus*

**Temp:** slightly cold  
**Taste:** bitter, toxic  
**Channels:** LU, LI  
**Dosage:** 3-9 grams

1. stops cough and wheezing
  - for cough and wheezing due to Lung heat, phlegm, or dry heat
2. clears Large Intestine heat
  - for swelling and pain around the anus due to LI heat accumulation
  - e.g. hemorrhoid, anal fistula, and swelling



马  
兜  
铃

Ma Dou Ling is banned in the U.S. due to its aristolochic acid content (it can cause Kidney failure).  
In Bensky, this herb has been moved to the category *Obsolete Substances*.

# Summary

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**xing ren**  
*armericae semen*

stops cough

- moistens LI (seed)

**zi wan**  
*asterisk radix*

stops cough  
• for heat and cold conditions

**kuan dong hua**  
*farfarae flos*

stops cough  
• for heat and cold conditions

**zi su zi**  
*perillae fructus*

stops cough  
• transforms phlegm-cold

- moistens LI (seed)

**pi pa ye**  
*eribotryae foilum*

stops cough  
• phlegm in chest

- ST heat/rebellious ST qi (nausea, vomiting)

**bai bu**  
*stemonaе radix*

stops cough  
• moistens LU

- kills parasites (pinworm and lice)

**sang bai pi**  
*mori cortex*

stops cough  
• clears LU heat

- promotes urination to treat edema
- lowers high blood pressure

**ma dou ling**  
*aristolochiae fructus*

stops cough  
• for LU heat

- drains LI heat (hemorrhoid, fistula)
- **toxic; banned in USA**