

## Chapter 9

# Chinese Herbs

This chapter includes a list of common herbs that are extremely beneficial. The most common applications and possible results are listed.

Many of the herbs and foods mentioned in this chapter are included in the soups we will be discussing in chapter 15, *Soups for the Skin*.

### Aduki Beans (Chi Xiao Dou)



#### Preparation/Application

Adzuki beans may be cooked like any other dry bean. They may be added to a soup, stew or served as a side dish.

1. Soak the dry beans overnight in clean water, drain and rinse.
2. Place the beans in a pot with 4 cups of water for every cup of beans.
3. Cook the beans until they are soft.

#### Possible Results

1. Removes dark circles under the eyes
2. Treats acne
3. Treats edema
4. Moves blood

## Angelica Root (Dang Gui)



### Possible Results

1. Tonifies the blood to treat pale skin
2. Addresses irregular menses
3. Regenerates the skin
4. Alleviates acne and congested skin

A tincture is a medicine consisting of a small amount of a drug dissolved in alcohol. It is in liquid form.

### Preparation/Application

This herb has many different applications. It can be purchased at any health food store in capsule form or in a tincture (see sidebar for definition). It can also be purchased in raw form at any Chinese herbal store. The raw form may be boiled into tea.

#### Soup or stew

1. Add 4–5 slices of Dang Gui when you add the other vegetables.
2. Remove Dang Gui before serving or eat them with the soup.

#### Facial

1. Boil the herb to make a tea.
2. Stir 1 cup of the cooled tea into water and rinse face several times.

## Anise Stars (Ba Chio)



### Possible Results

1. Alleviates cough
2. Helps with digestion
3. Tonifies the spleen-pancreas
4. Treats sallow skin

### Preparation/Application

Anise may be purchased in crushed or whole form from most grocery stores. It can be added to marinades, baked goods or soups. The whole anise stars can be made into tea.

1. For an adult serving, place about 3–4 stars in a cup of hot water. Steep for 3–4 minutes. Drink tea with or without the stars.
2. For infants, only use 1 or 2 stars and remove them after the tea steeps.

## Astragalus (Huang Qi)



### Preparation/Application

Huang Qi has as many applications as Dang Gui. It may be purchased at any health food store in pill form or in a tincture or from an Asian market in its raw form. It is used in many Chinese herbal formulas. The raw form can be boiled and made into tea or added to soup.

### Possible Results

1. Addresses spleen-pancreas deficiency
2. Treats sagging skin
3. Strengthens weak immune system
4. Tonifies qi and blood
5. Reduces edema
6. Promotes the discharge of pus from skin

## Bitter Melon (Ku Gua)



### Preparation/Application

Bitter melon looks like a funny old cucumber and may be purchased in the produce section of any Asian grocery store. It can be stuffed and baked, sliced and steamed or eaten raw. It is also sold in dry form as a tea and some health food stores use it as an ingredient in a capsule for diabetics. To bake:

### Possible Results

1. Lowers blood sugar (for diabetics)
2. Treats psoriasis
3. Treats acne
4. Relieves common cold
5. Treats rosacea
6. Treats couperose (dilation of red blood vessels)
7. Gets the digestive juices flowing

1. Cut in half and remove the seeds.
2. Soak in salty water to draw out some of the bitterness.
3. Stuff with pork or vegetables and bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes.

## Black Fungus (Bai Mu Er)



### Preparation/Application

Black fungus is available in any Asian market in the dry foods section. It may be sliced and added raw to any salad, soup or stir fry.

1. Soak the freeze-dried fungus in hot water until its expands and softens.
2. Add the rehydrated fungus to rice noodles, vegetables and broth.

### Possible Results

1. Tonifies yin
2. Tonifies the kidneys
3. Addresses dark circles under the eyes
4. Alleviates hyperpigmentation
5. Removes fine lines around the eyes
6. Treats dry skin
7. Strengthens weak knees and lower back

## Black Sesame Seeds (Hei Zhi Ma)



### Preparation/Application

Black sesame seeds may be purchased in the spice section of any grocery store. Simply sprinkle them on a salad, sauce or on top of vegetables to season.

### Possible Results

1. Nourishes and tonifies the liver and kidneys
2. Removes fine lines around the eyes
3. Removes dark circles under the eyes
4. Treats dry skin
5. Addresses gray hair