

Codonopsis (Codonopsis pilosula)
Common Name: Poor man's ginseng

Location: This herb can be found in Asia.

Description: The taproot of this herb is used medicinally.

Properties: Codonopsis can be used to treat cancer, upset stomachs, headaches, and asthma. This herb can also be used to increase stamina level.

Uses: Use this herb to treat cancer, lupus, headaches, peptic ulcers and vomiting.

Doses: You can find this herb in tincture, tea and tablet form.

Warnings: When using this herb to treat ulcers consult a physician first.

Codonopsis Root

Also known as

Codonopsis pilosula, Bastard Ginseng, Bellflower, Bonnet Bellflower, Codonopsis tangshen, Codonopsis tubulosa, Dangshen, Radix Codonopsis.

Introduction

Codonopsis is a twining perennial. It reaches a length of five feet, and has oval leaves and distinct bell shaped greenish purple flowers. It is native to Asia and China, but now cultivated worldwide, sometimes only for its ornamental value. The long, sweet taproot is used extensively in herbal medicine.

Codonopsis holds an important in Traditional Chinese and Japanese Medicine as a remedy for chronic fatigue, or what is called "false fire syndrome" in China. Codonopsis was first described in the herbal tome Ben Jing Feng Yaun in 1695 C.E. as a lung cleanser (qing fe). As a cooling herb, codonopsis is useful in any illness in which "spleen qi deficiency" a deficiency of digestive energies, is the underlying cause. It is also known to strengthen the digestive, respiratory, and immune systems. It has been called the "poor man's ginseng" as it has often been used as a ginseng substitute in herbal formulas when ginseng was too expensive or not available.

Constituents

Friedelin, taraxerol, alpha-spinasterol, alpha-spinasterol-beta-D-glucopyranoside, n-butyl-alpha-D-fructofuranoside and n-butyl-beta-D-fructopyranoside.

Parts Used

Root.

Typical Preparations

Teas, tablets, and tinctures.

Summary

Codonopsis has been used for centuries to treat appetite loss, diarrhea, and vomiting. Laboratory studies suggest that codonopsis extracts act by reducing the secretion of pepsin in the stomach, and by slowing the rate at which the stomach passes food to the intestines. In animal studies, codonopsis can prevent the formation of peptic ulcers induced by stress. Codonopsis also eases asthma attacks by reducing the production of hormones that cause constriction of the bronchia passages. With the healing properties, this herb is especially useful for asthma or peptic ulcers that are compounded by loss of appetite, diarrhea, or vomiting. Codonopsis may also be used to assist recovery of cancer patients treated with radiation therapy. A clinical study in China involved 76 cancer patients treated with radiation found that codonopsis teas could delay destruction of healthy cells. Treatment with the herb increased the ability of interleukin-2, an immune-system chemical, to fight colorectal cancer, lymphoma, melanoma, and kidney cancer (renal cell carcinoma). Codonopsis also restrains the immune system in lupus, a condition in which the immune system attacks the DNA found in the body's own skin cells.

Precautions

No restrictions for use. Be aware that codonopsis is a relatively inexpensive herb that is often substituted for *Panax ginseng* in herbal tonics labeled as "ginseng."