

Fo-ti (*Polygonum multiflorum*)

Common Names: Ho She Wu , ho shou wu.

Location: This herb is located in Taiwan, Japan, North Korea and China.

Description: The root of this herb is used medicinally. It is boiled with black beans and made into a paste that can be consumed.

Properties: Ho she wu is used to calm the nerves, increase energy and lower cholesterol.

Uses: This herb can be used to lower cholesterol and treat insomnia.

Doses: Ho she wu can be found in capsule and tablet form.

Warnings: Do not ingest the root of this herb un-cooked.

## Fo-Ti Root and Powder Profile

### Also known as

Also known as- *Polygonum multiflorum*, ho shou wu, fleecflower vine, polygonum flower, climbing knotweed, flowery knotwood, Chinese cornblind.

### Introduction

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, Fo-Ti is one of the herbs used to nourish the heart and calm the spirit. It has red stems, heart shaped leaves and either white or pink flowers. The literal English translation of its name is "vine to pass through the night." With a distinctive sweet yet bitter taste, fo-ti was thought to unblock the channels of energy through the body, allowing the escape of the pathogenic influences that cause generalized weakness, soreness, pain, and fatigue. Depending on the method of processing, there are four different types of Fo-Ti on the market: raw, cured, wine, and steamed. Raw and cured are the most used, and the ones mostly imported into the US. The plant is also used as a wash for itching and skin rashes. Another use of the herb is bringing color back to graying hair. The Chinese nickname for the herb, ho shou wu, literally means "Mr. He's Black Hair," Mr. He being a man of Chinese legend who restored his youth and sexual potency by taking Fo-Ti tea. Chinese tradition teaches that the herb should be used by itself or cured in the water used to cook black beans for this purpose. The curing of Fo-Ti has been found to increase the phosphates (presumably lecithin) by close to 30%, also increasing the sugar content. The production of traditional Fo-Ti root according to traditional Chinese medicine is revered and is kept as a close secret, however the basic process involves curing raw Fo-Ti roots in a soup of black bean sauce and wine. Those with gluten sensitivities may want to avoid using this product.

### Constituents

Chrysophanic acid, chrysophanol, emodin.

## **Parts Used**

Two varieties are predominantly used. Traditional Chinese medicine call for a Fo-Ti which is cured in a traditional black bean sauce, however there is also a form known as "White Fo-Ti" which is the uncured and raw root which is firm, coarse, and light brown or beige in color. The variety stocked by Mountain Rose Herbs is cured in the black bean sauce according to traditional Chinese standards.

## **Typical Preparations**

Teas and tinctures. Traditionally combined with jujubes and/or biota to treat insomnia. Sometimes found in capsule form.

## **Summary**

The traditional indication for Fo-Ti is insomnia with nightmares. Fo-Ti is a mild stimulant to estrogen production in women, making it appropriate for treating a variety of undesirable symptoms in menopause.

## **Precautions**

Not to be used while pregnant. Excessive use may cause gastro-intestinal upset and diarrhea.