

Forsythia Fruit Profile

Also known as

Forsythiae suspensae, Lian Qiao, and weeping forsythia.

Introduction

Forsythia fruit is the fruit of those lovely bright yellow bushes that are often the first thing to bloom in spring in any northern climate. Native to China, forsythia grows nearly everywhere in the world. In the US it is grown mostly as an ornamental. It is named for 18th century English gardening expert William Forsyth, who was one of the founders of the Royal Horticulture Society. Although native to China, it was brought to the west by botanist Robert Fortune in 1833. The fruit is used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat colds and viral infections that present with a fever, as an anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, and as part of a cardiovascular tonic. It was generally prescribed for all types of "over-heating" or heat related conditions. It's most often combined with honeysuckle flowers in honeysuckle forsythia fruit, which is possibly the most widely used cold remedy in mainland China and in Chinese immigrant centers in other countries.

Constituents

Phenylethanoids, forsythiaside and suspensaside, lignans, phillyrin and (+)- pinoresinol O-p-D-glucoside and phenylethanoids

Parts Used

Fruit

Typical Preparations

Steamed and dried, used in decoctions and infusions, teas, capsules and extracts.

Summary

Forsythia fruit has been used for thousands of years in traditional Chinese medicine, though the first mention of its most common use - in honeysuckle forsythia flower blend - is in a 1789 herbal compendium. There's been little modern research, though the anecdotal evidence for its effectiveness against fever, cough and chest complaints is well-documented in the annals of traditional medicine. One small study from Korea suggests that constituents found in forsythia flower may be helpful in improving the cholesterol profile by increasing the proportion of 'good' cholesterol in the blood and encouraging the excretion of bad cholesterol. In modern Chinese herbal medicine, lian qiao (forsythia fruit) is prescribed when a broad spectrum antibiotic effect is desired. In addition, forsythia fruit seems to have an antimicrobial, anti-emetic and anti-parasitic effect.

Precautions

There are no reports of harmful side effects of using forsythia fruit, however its use while pregnant should be avoided.