

Privet Fruit and Powder Profile

Also known as- Ligustrum lucidum, nu zhen zi, Glossy Privet, and Chinese Privet.

Introduction

The privet fruit is native to China and Eastern Europe, but has now been naturalized throughout the world. It was introduced into the US in 1852 for use as an ornamental. The glossy fruit of the privet bush is one of the oldest Chinese herbal remedies, used for over 2,000 years, at least from the time of the writing of the Divine Husbandman's Classic of the Materia Medica in 190 BCE. It has cooling properties that are known to help the yin, and augment weakness in the liver and kidneys. Known in Chinese as the "female chastity seed," privet fruit was an ancient remedy for premature graying of the hair, ringing in the ear, spots before the eyes, and lower back pain, all of which were associated with excessive sexual activity. It has often been combined with chrysanthemum and wolfberries, and then used as a tonic.

Constituents

Tannins, oleanolic acid, betulinic acid, ursolic acid. Contains many of the same saponins as soy.

Parts Used

Fruit, dried and either whole or powdered.

Typical Preparations

Teas, tinctures, encapsulations, frequently mixed with other herbs.

Summary

Sweet and bitter at the same time, privet fruit is added to herbal combinations to clear out the "heat" associated with infection and emotional tension. Chinese medicine also uses privet fruit to treat dizziness and blurred vision, especially if symptoms are worst during times of emotional stress. Modern research has found that the fatty acids in privet fruit are especially helpful for protecting the body from contamination with heavy metals, notably arsenic and cadmium.

Precautions

Avoid when there is chronic diarrhea.