

News Autumn 2018



Dear Practitioner,

Happy Autumn! **In this issue**, you will find an article by Jake Schmalzriedt, DOM on using Chinese herbs for patients with **Parkinson's Disease**, a piece by John Heuertz, DOM on **Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** for **bronchitis**, and an article on **the five elements and essential oils** by David Crow, founder of Floracopeia. In addition, we are pleased to share more **food wisdom** from Andrew Serman. His pieces have been a popular addition to our newsletter for the last few years (back issues can be found on our website).

As long-time practitioners of AOM, we urge you to support your state professional AOM association and encourage your colleagues to become members. It is critical that we are engaged on all levels to create a better future for our profession.

Update on the Acupuncture Now Foundation (ANF)

The ANF is a U.S.-based, international non-profit dedicated to educating the public, healthcare providers, and health policymakers about the practice of acupuncture. Over the last few years, they have authored two official "white papers," co-authored another, and have submitted information on acupuncture research to several governmental agencies. Their highest profile project involves producing a documentary series, *Getting to the Point*, that showcases how acupuncture impacts people's lives. The first episode was released in May 2018 and shows how a licensed acupuncturist working in a leading children's hospital helped two children with brain cancer. The film was directed and co-produced by Doug Dearth, whose previous credits include the film *9,000 Needles*. They hope to produce another one or two episodes within the next year and land a major distributor like Netflix or Amazon Prime.

It was always an ANF belief that showing a licensed acupuncturist as an integral staff member of a leading children's hospital would help fuel interest in bringing acupuncture services into hospitals. "We already know of one children's hospital in Tennessee that decided to hire a licensed acupuncturist after viewing the trailer to our film!" To help speed this interest along, ANF's President, Matthew Bauer L.Ac, is chairing a "Hospital Acupuncture Services Task Force." The goal of this task force is to put together a resource guide that will help hospital administrators and department heads better understand how to incorporate acupuncture services into their facilities.

Anyone interested in helping with this project can contact Matthew at MBauer@acunow.org. They are also looking for more people to watch and share this film! Please send people to the ANF website for free viewing. You can also help spread the word by embedding the film's 2 ½ minute trailer on your website. For more information and the embed code go to communications@acunow.org. As a charitable organization, the ANF relies on donations to support their work. They also offer 5 excellent online CEU/PDA/CPD courses with all proceeds going to fund ANF operations like their documentary series and task force. You can visit their website www.acunow.org to learn more and support the ANF's vision of "Creating a world where the benefits of acupuncture are known and available to all."

We at Golden Flower are committed to supporting the growth and acceptance of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. We greatly appreciate your business and support, as well as all of your communication, comments, and feedback.

Sincerely,

John Scott, DOM and Lorena Monda, DOM



Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula for Bronchitis

BY JOHN HEUERTZ, DOM

Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*) is probably most famous for being the formula that treats “plum-pit qi”—the sensation that something is lodged in the throat. You can tell there is no object there, but it feels as if you are swallowing around a “plum pit” or a “morsel of roasted meat.” This sensation cannot be moved by coughing or swallowing. Modern medicine calls this sensation “glomus hystericus.” The pattern that creates this sensation is a combination of liver qi stagnation and phlegm when the patient has an underlying spleen qi deficiency. Commonly, the condition will arise when someone is eating a poor, phlegm-inducing diet and is under stress. I am told by my colleagues in the Pacific Northwest that this is a very common phenomenon for students around test time. Because of its high percentage of pinellia (*ban xia*) and ginger (*sheng jiang*), **Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*) is also a commonly prescribed formula for nausea and vomiting, but in the last few years I have discovered its usefulness in treating bronchitis.

Bronchitis is listed as one of the conditions addressed by **Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*), but among my immediate colleagues at least, it is not an condition I hear it being prescribed for. I have found **Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*) to be extremely useful and effective for treating certain presentations of bronchitis. I shied away from it for a long time because I thought the formula too warming for most acute conditions. Even with a clear-cut, wind-cold invasion, I thought, prescribing this formula was too risky because of the chance that its warming substances might transform the wind-cold into heat and become too drying. But if there are no heat signs, **Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*) can clear up the bronchitis within just a few days.

Typically, bronchitis develops in a later stage of a respiratory infection. One doesn’t “catch” bronchitis; rather, one “catches” a respiratory virus or reacts to an allergen and, if one is so prone, bronchitis can develop if the lung qi is weak at the time. If the phlegm is yellow and there is even a low-grade fever, then a better choice might be **Fritilaria and Pinellia Formula** (*Chuan Bei Ban Xia Tang*).

In recent years, I have probably seen more cases of lingering bronchitis than I have of early-stage upper respiratory conditions. Most patients choose to wait out a viral infection or are not able to come in for an appointment during the first day or two of an exterior invasion, so the

tendency has become more for them to make an appointment to get rid of a lingering cough. This is usually the perfect scenario in which **Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*) can shine: after the virus seems to be gone or dormant, the heat signs are negligible, but the cough and the chest constriction persist.

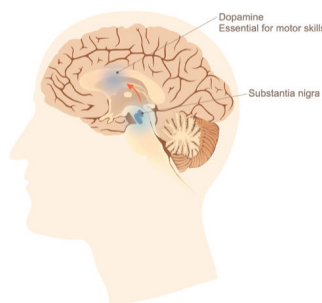
Herbal Treatment for Parkinson's

BY JAKE SCHMALZRIEDT, DOM

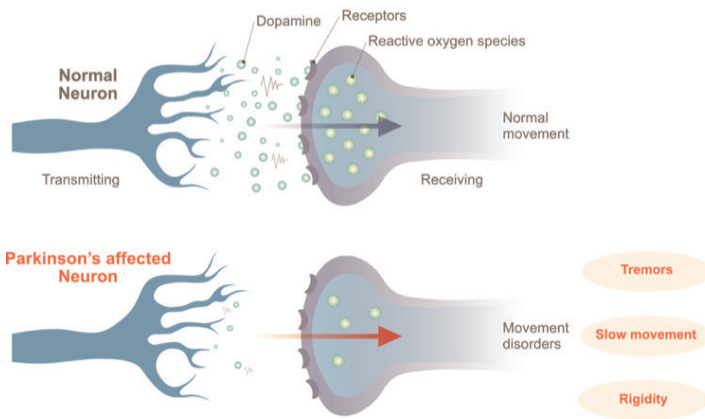
(An expanded version of this article with acupuncture treatment is available on our website, www.gfcherbs.com)

Parkinson’s disease (PD) is a neurodegenerative disorder of the central nervous system, specifically affecting dopamine-producing neurons in the substantia nigra area of the brain. Parkinson’s disease is a chronic and progressive disease, with symptoms generally developing over years. The primary symptoms of Parkinson’s disease include: tremors (mainly occurring at rest), bradykinesia (slowness of movement), akinesia (rigidity, loss, and/or impairment of movement), and balance, gait, and posture disorders. Other features of Parkinson’s disease may include emotional and behavioral symptoms like anxiety, depression, and apathy; sleep disorders like nocturnal hallucinations, vivid dreams and nightmares; decrease in cognitive function such as slow thought processes and difficulty organizing, planning, and decision making; and decrease in digestive function. The severity of symptoms and progression of disease is different for every individual and it is unlikely that an individual with Parkinson’s disease will experience all the symptoms listed above.

Parkinson’s disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder behind Alzheimer’s disease. It is more common in males. The average age of onset is 60 and the prevalence increases with age, affecting roughly 1% - 2% of the elderly population. It is more common in Hispanic and white populations and there is thought to be a genetic predisposition to Parkinson’s disease. Other risk factors include environmental toxins like exposure to pesticides. There is a higher prevalence of Parkinson’s disease in people with type II diabetes. The cause is unknown and there is currently no cure. Treatment is focused on minimizing symptoms and improving quality of life.

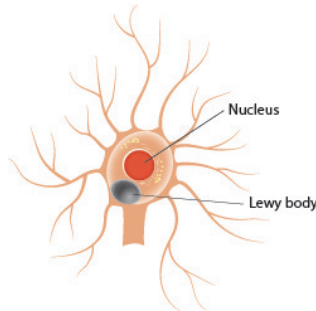


The substantia nigra is made up of two major neuronal groupings: the pars compacta (SNpc) and the pars reticulata (SNpr). Substantia nigra pars compacta (SNpc) is the main source of dopamine to the striatum, a



principal component of the basal ganglia which, among others, has the role in facilitating voluntary movement. The basal ganglia, along with the cerebellum, are part of a feedback loop with the cerebral cortex (motor cortex) that initiates voluntary muscle movement. The basal ganglia output is inhibitory and the cerebellum is excitatory. The balance between the two systems allows for the correct execution of smooth and coordinated movement. In Parkinson's disease, the degeneration of dopaminergic neurons inhibits this process. Neuronal loss may also be seen in other parts of the nervous system in Parkinson's disease patients; however, the primary pathological focus is on the process described above. While the pathology of neuronal apoptosis is unknown more and more evidence is suggesting that there is oxidative stress and free radical involvement in the substantia nigra.

The histological hallmark of Parkinson's disease is the presence of Lewy bodies, specifically the neuropathological findings of α -synuclein-containing Lewy body pathology in the brain. Lewy bodies are defined as abnormal fibrillar aggregates of protein that develop inside nerve cells, specifically within the substantia nigra and cortical regions, displacing other cell components. Lewy body formation has been considered to be a marker for neuronal degeneration.



There is no definitive Western diagnostic testing method for Parkinson's disease. Diagnosis is based on clinical symptoms, neurological examinations, and medical history. A new diagnostic imaging technique, DaTscan, used to visualize dopamine degeneration in the brain, helps confirm diagnosis.

While much research is going into further understanding Parkinson's disease, the current Western medical treatment approach is to address symptom relief and improve quality of life. Levodopa is the most commonly prescribed and most potent drug for controlling Parkinson's

disease symptoms. Levodopa has a "wearing off" effect that develops after 2-5 years. This is where the effectiveness of the Western medication diminishes or seems to suddenly stop working before the next dosing time, causing a return of abnormal movement; this irregular symptom control is known as 'motor fluctuations'. Another commonly used pharmaceutical is Sinemet which is a combination of carbidopa and levodopa. This medication is used to prolong effectiveness of levodopa and reduce side effects. Other pharmaceutical drugs used fall into the following classes: dopamine agonists (DA), which mimic dopamine effects in your brain; catechol-o-methyltransferase (COMT) inhibitors, used to prolong the effects of levodopa; and non-dopaminergic agents, used to manage motor symptoms. Western surgical options include deep brain stimulation. This surgery implants electrodes in areas of the brain that receive electrical impulses, helping to reduce Parkinson's disease symptoms.

UNDERSTANDING PARKINSON'S DISEASE FROM A CHINESE MEDICINE PERSPECTIVE

With age comes the decline in kidney function. As Parkinson's disease is a disease of the elderly and aging, there will always be a component of kidney deficiency associated with this condition, specifically kidney yin and *jing*. According to the cycles of 7 and 8, around the age of 40, kidney energy has started its decline. By the mid 50's the sinews and tendons become rigid due to a decline of the kidney's support of the liver. And by the mid 60's the bones become weak due to the further decline of kidney *jing*.

The liver and kidney are two of the primary organs involved in Parkinson's disease, and in these situations the definition between liver and kidney become blurred, as these two organs have a very close relationship. It is stated that, "The liver and kidney have the same source." Kidney *jing* is required for the generation of liver blood, and the nourishment of blood is required for the transformation of *jing*. Deficiency in one leads to deficiency in the other.

In Chinese medicine, Parkinson's disease is commonly seen as the consumption of liver and kidney yin fluid due to aging. Kidney yin nourishes liver yin and blood. When kidney yin is deficient, it fails to nourish the liver. When this occurs, liver yin and blood fail to nourish sinews and tendons. This dryness and lack of nourishment is seen in patients with Parkinson's disease as muscular rigidity and stiffness; and as liver yin and blood become deficient, internal wind is generated, causing spasms and tremors. Additionally, stiffness is commonly associated with wind in Chinese medicine. In order to prevent internal wind from stirring, the liver yin and blood must

be ample; and in order to fully support the liver, kidney *jing* must be sufficient.

Parkinson's disease, a disorder affecting the central nervous system, can also be thought of as a disorder of the extraordinary organs: marrow and brain. The kidney controls and produces marrow, as marrow is formed from the yin aspect of kidney *jing*, and the kidney itself gives rise to the brain, the sea of marrow. When the kidney becomes deficient, the marrow becomes deficient and fails to nourish the brain and spinal cord (via *jing*), resulting in problems with the central nervous system, like Parkinson's disease; as well as causing some of the mental and emotional issues associated with Parkinson's disease like depression, anxiety, and apathy. Nourishing the kidneys is the primary strategy to support the marrow and brain, helping to slow progression of disease.

Another pattern presentation—though not as common for Parkinson's disease—is qi and blood deficiency which gives rise to internal wind. When qi and blood become deficient, they are unable to nourish the tendons and muscles. This allows internal wind to stir, causing spasms in the channels and rigidity in the muscles. Generally, this pattern presents with milder symptomology and can be part of a complex pattern along with yin deficiency. A modification of this pattern is spleen deficiency with damp-phlegm obstruction: damp-phlegm obstructing the channels causing tremors, stiffness, and uncoordinated movement. As prenatal qi depletes due to aging, it is important to support spleen and stomach function (post-natal qi) in order to aid in the support of the kidney (pre-natal qi). Another pattern may include qi stagnation, which can be commonly seen with qi and blood deficiency, eg. *Xiao Yao San* presentation. Liver qi stagnation often occurs due to life stressors. As the free flow of qi becomes impaired it will eventually lead to blood stasis.

Along with the aging process comes the development of blood stasis, as a decrease in circulation leads to stagnation of blood. Moreover, long-term qi and blood deficiency will eventually lead to blood stasis as the qi is unable to move blood. While not often talked about, blood stasis is commonly present in patients with Parkinson's disease, though it is generally not a primary pattern in and of itself. Blood stasis in the elderly presents as stiffness, hardness, contracture, and rigidity.

A note on liver yang rising: As mentioned earlier, kidney and liver have a close relationship, this is especially true in regards to the balance between yin and yang within these organs. These two organs are mutually responsible for keeping the other balanced. Thus when pathology sets in on one organ, the other quickly becomes affected. Deficiency of kidney yin quickly causes deficiency of liver yin as mentioned above. The decline of liver and

kidney yin causes an inability or failure to control yang, leading to yang rising and yang hyperactivity, causing internal wind to stir, resulting in tremors. It should be noted that tremors due to yang hyperactivity are not necessarily a principle pattern for Parkinson's disease. However this pattern is seen when patients experience situations and emotions that worsen hyperactive yang—like emotional stress, frustration, and anger—resulting in a worsening of their condition.

TREATMENT STRATEGIES

Primary treatment is directed at nourishing liver and kidney yin, and extinguishing wind. Other treatment objectives are to nourish qi and blood, support the spleen and stomach in order to facilitate the generation of post-natal qi, regulate qi and blood circulation, and resolve phlegm obstruction.

Combination treatment using acupuncture and herbal therapy, along with a movement therapy like tai chi, qi-gong, or yoga, is most effective. Additional counseling on diet, lifestyle, and meditation is also recommended. Chinese medicine can be an effective treatment to control and reduce the severity of the symptomology, thereby improving quality of life for the patient and helping them to maintain their independence. It can help slow or delay the progression of disease and help prevent the worsening of symptoms. A meta-analysis was conducted, which included a systemic literature search from 1950-2011 involving Chinese medicine adjuvant therapy versus conventional Western treatment alone. The outcome was measured by a reduction of Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale (UPDRS) scores. UPDRS is a rating scale used to evaluate the progression of Parkinson's disease through interview and clinical evaluation. The results showed that compared to conventional treatment alone that Chinese medicine as an adjuvant therapy resulted in greater improvement in UPDRS I, II, III, IV scores, and UPDRS I-IV total scores. (Wang Y, et al., "Chinese Herbal Medicine Paratherapy for Parkinson's Disease: A Meta-analysis of 19 Randomized Controlled Trials," *Evidence Bases Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2012.)

Treatment with Herbal Therapy

When using herbal therapy for Parkinson's disease, a combination approach is quite common; addressing both symptomology like quelling internal wind to arrest tremors while also treating the underlying condition, for example liver and kidney yin deficiency. As described above there are several common Chinese medicine patterns for Parkinson's disease. The most common of which is internal wind due to liver and kidney yin deficiency. That pattern is followed by qi and blood deficiency, spleen qi deficiency with damp, blood stasis, and yin and yang deficiency.

Liver and Kidney Yin Deficiency with Internal Wind—

For treating liver and kidney yin deficiency with internal wind, **Gastrodia and Uncaria Formula** (*Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin*) is a key formula. This formula calms the liver, nourishes yin to subdue yang, and extinguishes wind. Gastrodia (*tian ma*) and uncaria (*gou teng*), the co-chief herbs in this formula, are primary herbs to treat internal liver wind. **Hematite and Scrophularia Combination** (*Zhen Gan Xi Feng Tang*, KPC 4130) is another formula that addresses internal wind due to yin deficiency. When comparing these two formulas, **Hematite and Scrophularia Combination** (*Zhen Gan Xi Feng Tang*) is going to be stronger and have a focus to anchor yang, while **Gastrodia and Uncaria Formula** (*Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin*) has the added function to move blood and calm *shen*. Either of these formulas may be modified/supplemented with **Rehmannia Six Formula** (*Liu Wei Di Huang Wan*) or **True Yin Formula** (*Zuo Gui Jia Er Zhi Wan*) to further supplement yin if needed. Use caution with long-term use of **True Yin Formula** (*Zuo Gui Jia Er Zhi Wan*), as it can become cloying and disrupt middle burner function.

If qi stagnation is present along with yin deficiency, **Linking Formula** (*Yi Guan Jian*) is appropriate to add to **Gastrodia and Uncaria Formula** (*Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin*).

He Shou Wu Tablets (*Shou Wu Pian*) is another addition that is beneficial to further support yin, blood, and *jing*.

Heavenly Emperor's Formula (*Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan*) can be used for mental and behavioral disorders associated with Parkinson's disease, when due to yin deficiency—like emotional instability, anxiety, and insomnia. And if insomnia is predominant, **Zizyphus Formula** (*Suan Zao Ren Tang*) can be used.

Yin and Yang Deficiency—If a patient is presenting with a mixed yin and yang deficiency pattern, **Two Immortals Formula** (*Jia Jian Er Xian Tang*) is an effective choice. This formula is excellent for general decline of kidney energy. It supplements yang to strengthen yin. The strength of the modifications implemented in this formula include several key herbs: cistanches (*rou cong rong*) and cuscuta (*tu si zi*) to support both yin and yang, salvia (*dan shen*) and tree peony (*mu dan pi*) to improve blood circulation and reduce stasis. Additionally, this formula is beneficial for emotional imbalances associated with Parkinson's disease, such as depression and anxiety.

Qi and Blood Deficiency—For qi and blood deficiency, **Women's Precious Formula** (*Ba Zhen Tang*) is the formula of choice. This formula should be used in combination with **Gastrodia and Uncaria Formula** (*Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin*) to address wind. If *shen* or mental health imbalances are prevalent, use **Ginseng and Longan Formula** (*Gui Pi Tang*), again in conjunction with **Gastrodia and Uncaria Formula** (*Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin*). *Shen*

disturbances related to aging are often associated with heart, spleen, and liver. **Ginseng and Longan Formula** (*Gui Pi Tang*) has a focus on the heart and spleen and can be beneficial for conditions like anxiety, depression, lack of interest, and insomnia commonly seen in patients with Parkinson's disease. Another formula to consider for qi and blood deficiency is **Tang Kuei and Astragalus Formula** (*Dang Gui Bu Xue Tang*, KPC 3570). This simple formula uses a large percentage of astragalus (*huang qi*) to support qi in order to supplement blood, plus tang kuei (*dang gui*) to supplement and move blood. Astragalus (*huang qi*) has been shown to have protective effects against neurotoxicity as well as to reduce adverse effects of levodopa. This formula can be used alone or combined with other formulas to further facilitate the supplementation of qi and blood.

Astragalus and Peony Combination (*Bu Yang Huan Wu Tang*, KPC 3680) is another formula used for Parkinson's disease. Much like **Tang Kuei and Astragalus Formula** (*Dang Gui Bu Xue Tang*), this formula uses a large dose of astragalus (*huang qi*) to support qi and aid the production of blood, it adds blood moving herbs to facilitate the aforementioned action, and uses earthworm (*di long*) to extinguish wind. Buthus (*quan xie*) and gastrodia (*tian ma*) are powerful additions to any formula for Parkinson's. They enter the liver channel, extinguish liver wind, and dredge collaterals to stop tremors and help with rigidity, and are common additions to **Astragalus and Peony Combination** (*Bu Yang Huan Wu Tang*). Buthus (*quan xie*) is toxic, so it is important to pay attention to dosing. For example, with 100 grams of granule **Astragalus and Peony Combination** (*Bu Yang Huan Wu Tang*) add five grams of granule buthus (*quan xie*).

Spleen Deficiency with Damp—For spleen deficiency with damp use **Pinellia and Gastrodia Combination** (*Ban Xia Bai Zhu Tian Ma Tang*, KPC 1150). This formula effectively addresses wind-phlegm. It uses atracylodes (*bai zhu*) and poria (*fu ling*) to strengthen the spleen and dry damp; pinellia (*ban xia*) and citrus peel (*ju hong*) to dry damp and transform phlegm; gastrodia (*tian ma*) to calm the liver and extinguish wind; and licorice (*gan cao*), ginger (*sheng jiang*), and jujube (*da zao*) to harmonize the middle burner. Another option to consider for spleen deficiency with damp is to combine **Six Gentleman Formula** (*Liu Jun Zi Tang*) with **Gastrodia and Uncaria Formula** (*Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin*).

Blood Stasis—Blood stasis is often part of a bigger pattern like liver and kidney yin deficiency with blood stasis in the collaterals. Adding a formula like **Corydalis Formula** (*Shao Yao Gan Cao Jia Yan Hu Tang*) to address the blood stasis element in treatment is appropriate.

Corydalis (*yan hu suo*) can improve circulation of blood and with the rest of the formula being the classical formula, *Shao Yao Gan Cao Tang*, it can be beneficial for issues of rigidity as it can further facilitate the nourishment tendons and sinews.

Another treatment approach is to use the modern formula, **Ginkgo Formula** (*Yin Guo Ye Wan*)—based on the patent medicine ‘Healthy Brain Pills.’ This formula is used for addressing mental acuity and focus, and is a unique formula to use with Parkinson’s disease. In addition to addressing primary symptoms of Parkinson’s disease, this formula is especially beneficial for cognitive function issues, like difficulty processing or organizing thoughts, planning out ideas, and decision making, as well as for emotional and behavior disorders. The focus of the formula is to support and increase circulation of cerebral blood flow and to reduce inflammation. The chief herb in **Ginkgo Formula** (*Yin Guo Ye Wan*), ginkgo leaf (*yin guo ye*), is an antioxidant and neuroprotective agent due to its ability to inhibit monoamine oxidase B (MAO-B) and can be used to control neuronal loss. MAO-B metabolizes dopamine and induces the formation of free radicals that can damage neurons. Inhibition of MAO-B can increase dopamine levels. Ginkgo leaf (*yin guo ye*) is supported by herbs to tonify yin and blood, herbs to nourish *jing*, and *shen*-calming/anchoring herbs, many of which have secondary functions to quell internal wind. This neurorestorative formula can be used alone or combined with a constitutional formula like **Rehmannia Six Formula** (*Liu Wei Di Huang Wan*).

The Classification of Essential Oils According to the Five Elements

BY DAVID CROW

Classifying essential oils and the effects of aromatherapy can offer some guidelines for how to use the oils, their therapeutic benefits and for knowing safety concerns. There are some oils that can easily be correlated with a specific element, and others that cannot. When correlating oils in this way, it is important to have clearly defined criteria and reasoning for why they are in that category. Because oils frequently have complex mixtures of elements, this is not always easy.

OILS OF THE FIRE ELEMENT

There are two basic criteria we can use for classifying oils into the element of fire. The first is that they have heating and stimulating effects on the body and mind. The second is that they have a strong propensity to burn the skin, mucosa of the GI tract, and other tissues. The most obvious oils that are in this category are traditional

spices, such as **cinnamon, clove, tulsi (holy basil), oregano, thyme, and black pepper**. These oils are typically high in phenols, which are dermatotoxic and caustic when ingested.

A secondary group that is less obvious are the citrus oils. These do not have the heating and stimulating effects of the spices when inhaled, but they are phototoxic if applied to the skin before exposure to sunlight. There are several other phototoxic oils, including **marigold** and **St. John’s Wort**. In these cases the oils may have overall effects that are actually cooling in nature, but their phototoxic aspects place them in the element of fire.

A third group are oils and aromatic herbs that are used in traditional Chinese medicine formulations for plasters, poultices, and liniments. These are generally based on combinations of **camphor, menthol, and capsicum**, along with blood vitalizing herbs. These can cause contact dermatitis if left on the skin too long, even if they produce a cooling effect at first.

Species that are related to the fire element are employed as herbs rather than oils in TCM, for the stimulation and regulation of the digestive fire and spleen yang, in the process also removing stagnant water.

OILS OF THE EARTH ELEMENT

There are three basic criteria we can use for classifying oils into the element of earth. The first is that they tend to come from roots. The second is that they tend to be heavy, thick, and viscous, which are qualities of the earth element. The third is that they have a general therapeutic effect of being grounding, calming, and stabilizing.

The most obvious examples of earth element oils are **vetiver** and **jatamansi**, a variety of **valerian root**. These can be said to be classic expressions of pure earth element, because they are dark, heavy, unctuous, calming, and stabilizing.

There are many other oils that come from roots, but they tend to represent mixtures with other elements. For example, **ginger, angelica, and osha** oils are a mixture of earth and fire, because of their root qualities combined with pungency. **Sandalwood** oil is frequently distilled from the roots as well as the heartwood; because of its origin, as well as its heavy and soft properties, we could say that it is based on earth and water.

OILS OF THE METAL ELEMENT

When it comes to classifying essential oils into the five elements, the metal element is conceptually problematic in many ways. If we use the correlation of the lungs being associated with the metal element, and the metal element being a poetic description of “armor,” in the form of mucous membrane immunity, there are many oils that can be classified in this element. In this case we can see a

clear correlation between the metal element in TCM and the air element in Ayurveda.

Aromatherapy can be classified primarily under the element of air/metal, because it is based on the diffusion of aromatic molecules through the atmosphere, and the inhalation of those molecules into our respiratory system. In that sense, all oils whose benefits are produced by atmospheric diffusion and inhalation can be correlated with this element.

In another sense, the biological functions of essential oils, both for the plants and for human uses, is protection from microbial pathogens. There are no essential oils that do not fit this criteria, including the attractant floral oils. The primary application of essential oils for this purpose is atmospheric diffusion. This method is not only a primary and highly effective treatment of upper respiratory infections, named as “wind” conditions in TCM, but also for reducing air borne microbial contagion and thereby enhancing general immunity. For that reason, any essential oil that is used for atmospheric purification and reduction of microbial contagion can be placed under the element of air for its atmospheric aspects, and metal for its immunological and respiratory aspects.

The oils that are easily correlated with air and metal are generally those derived from the leaves and needles of trees, which produce their oils for their own immunological protection on the surfaces where they come in contact with the air element. These specifically are the various species of **eucalypti**, and the conifers such as **spruces**, **pin**es, **firs**, and **junipers**. These oils could be clearly correlated with the air/metal element, and classified as “respiratory” oils specifically, because of their long historical association with treating respiratory conditions.

Oils that are related to the immunological aspects of metal and the respiratory system are frequently employed for their expectorant and decongestant effects. In this way, we could say that metal assists in the clearing of water from the passageways.

OILS OF THE WATER ELEMENT

The most obvious correlation between essential oils and the water element is that they are liquids. However, essential oils have very different chemistry, and are volatile and hydrophobic, which is why they rise and separate from the hydrosol that collects during distillation.

They also tend to have a drying effect on tissues, and so cannot be said to be of the nature of water, but more of air and space.

There are some reasons that can be given, however, for classifying a limited number of oils in this element. Aquatic flowers, such as **lotus**, might be considered an oil associated with the water element. The oils from tree roots such as **sandalwood** might also be considered, as it is mildly hydrating.

From the therapeutic standpoint, however, these are not particularly helpful associations. When looking for correlations of functions, we find the water element represented more in aspects of aromatic botanical medicine other than essential oils, specifically in **hydrosols** and carrier oils; these have actual hydrating effects on the tissue, and therefore more clearly associated with the water element.

OILS OF THE WOOD ELEMENT

There are two basic criteria that we could use to justify placing an oil in this category. The first would be that the oil was derived from wood; the second, that it had a specific effect on those physiological functions attributed to wood.

In the first case, examples include **sandalwood**, **agarwood**, **palo santo**, **juniper**, **cedar** and others like this.

In the second case, we can classify oils based on their functional relationship to the qualities of the liver and the wood element, which are said to govern the free flow of qi in the body. We therefore find that there are many conditions involving qi stagnation and constriction for many reasons.

One example is aromatherapy massage, which could be said to help the flow of qi in general, which positively influences the flow of liver qi mentally and emotionally as well. Another example is the case of wood attacking earth, in which digestive function is disturbed as a result of neurological influences from emotional tension. Aromatic herbs as teas are beneficial, as they assist in the dispersing of the stagnation and tension in the GI tract.

Another example is the emotional tension both caused by and a result of stagnation of the liver qi. This pattern is closely related to the wellbeing of the *shen*. The floral oils and their mood uplifting and anxiety reducing properties address this very effectively. We also find that many of the oils used for liver qi stagnation have endocrine balancing properties.



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"Golden Flowers's newsletters are the greatest regular publication I read, with the most helpful articles by far, all from superb practitioners."
—Blake Gafford, DOM

Also check out our formula monographs and other published papers, available at our website, www.gfcherbs.com, or call us for a free copy of our formula guide or pamphlets for your waiting room to educate your patients about Chinese herbs.

Preparing for the Season:

Great Formulas for the Herbal Medicine Cabinet



In addition to frequently prescribed formulas to release the exterior—**Yin Qiao, Gan Mao Ling** and **Zhong Gan Ling**—the following formulas are good to have on hand in the clinic and home medicine cabinet to prepare for whatever the season sends your way.

- **Jade Screen & Xanthium Formula**
(Yu Ping Feng Jia Cang Er San)
- **Jade Windscreen Formula** (Yu Ping Feng San)
- **Mulberry & Lycium Formula** (Xie Bai San)
- **Neck Formula** (Bai Zhi Ge Gen Wan)
- **Pu Ji Formula** (Pu Ji Xiao Du Yin)
- **Siler & Platycodon Formula**
(Fang Feng Tong Shen San)

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