



## Increase energy, improve resistance to disease, slow the aging process and build good health with **Tonic Herbs**

In the Western world, we tend to think a remedy is good if it's fast acting, that is, it quickly relieves the symptoms of a disease. That's because Western medicine considers a drug effective if it makes a specific, measurable change, such as bringing down high blood pressure or easing pain. Any remedy that gradually improves overall health over a long period of time isn't going to get the attention of modern pharmaceutical companies.

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) sees this differently. Fast acting, symptom-relieving agents are considered *inferior medicine*. A *superior medicine* is something that acts gradually and steadily to restore balance to the system, improving overall health. Out of the thousands of herbs used in TCM, only about 50 have been labeled superior medicines. The Western term for these slower acting, health-building herbs is *tonics*. Tonics are remedies that strengthen and balance the systems of the body.

### What Makes an Herb a Tonic?

In order to be recognized as a superior herb or tonic by TCM standards an herb must meet many criteria, including:

- It must have anti-aging properties and enhance longevity
- It must have broad and proven health-promoting actions
- In addition to improving one's physical health, it must also improve one's emotional and spiritual well-being
- It must have no negative side effects when used reasonably, thereby facilitating safe, daily use over a long period of time
- It must be easily digested and well tolerated by most people

Unlike therapeutic herbs that make specific changes in a particular organ or body system, such as laxatives, diuretics or expectorants, tonic herbs work gradually in subtle ways that benefit many body systems. They help to rebuild, renew and rejuvenate the whole body, but don't make quick, measurable changes in body function.

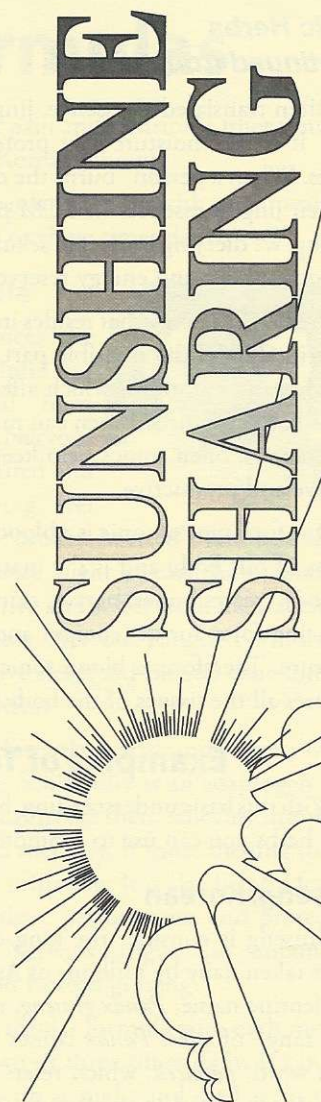
In this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*, we'll introduce you to a few major tonic herbs and several tonic herbal formulas, explaining their health-building benefits. You'll learn how these tonic herbs can increase energy and stamina, improve resistance to disease, slow the aging process and otherwise build good general health.

### Types of Tonics in Traditional Chinese Medicine

Before introducing remedies, however, we'd like to acquaint you with a few terms used in TCM to describe different types of tonics. For starters, TCM recognizes three basic energies in the body known collectively as the *three treasures*. These are *qi* (energy), *jing* (moisture or essence) and *shen* (spirit).

Qi (pronounced "ki" or "chee" and often spelled chi) is the basic energy of life. It is related to what Western herbalists called the vital force. It is the animating energy that gives us the capacity to move, think and feel. When one is young and energetic, they have abundant qi, but as a person grows older their qi often declines, making them subject to reduced vitality and degenerative disease. A qi tonic increases overall energy in the body.

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### Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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## Tonic Herbs

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Often translated as essence, jing is related to the fluids of the body. It is the moisture that protects, nourishes and lubricates tissues. When a person "burns the candle at both ends" they burn up their jing or essence. In TCM philosophy, when we burn out our jing, we die. Jing tonics aid sexual vigor, longevity and preserve the body's fluids and energy reserves.

Shen is the energy that resides in our heart. Roughly translated as spirit, shen is the invisible part of our nature, related to our thoughts and emotions, which affects the visible or physical part of our body. Disturbed shen can make a person agitated, irritable and anxious. Shen tonics help keep our emotions and thoughts positive and productive.

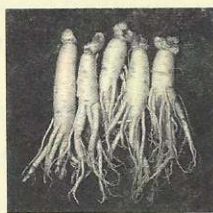
One final type of tonic is a blood tonic. Blood nourishes all the organs of our body and is the material foundation out of which the body creates bones, nerves, skin, muscles and organs. It is the balancing force for qi (energy) and relates more to our physical structure. Therefore, a blood tonic not only builds the blood, it nurtures all the tissues of the body.

## Examples of Tonic Herbs

With this basic understanding, here are some examples of major tonic herbs you can use to promote good health.

### Ginseng, Korean

Ginseng is considered the king of tonics, and is taken daily by millions of Asian men. Its scientific name, *Panax ginseng*, reflects its wide range of uses. *Panax* comes from the Latin word, *panacea*, which refers to remedies that are considered "cure alls," a term that describes a remedy that works on many different health problems.



Korean ginseng tonifies qi, replenishing vital energy, and calms the shen to improve mental and emotional wellbeing. Specifically, it improves immune function, enhances endurance, reduces stress, improves memory and enhances learning, calms the emotions and helps regulate blood sugar levels. It also promotes sexual vitality in men. A typical dose is 1-2 capsules twice daily.

### Ginseng, Wild American

American ginseng has many properties in common with Korean ginseng, but there are also a few differences. Korean ginseng is warming, while American ginseng is more cooling (less stimulating). It is a great digestive tonic for the elderly and helps to balance blood sugar in type 2 diabetes and its precursor, metabolic syndrome. American ginseng is effective in very small doses. Generally 1-2 capsules per day is sufficient.



### Dong Quai

Dong quai, also known as tang kuei or dang qui, is the queen of tonics, and may be the most extensively used herb in the world. Around half a billion women in China alone take this herb daily. Dong quai is a blood tonic, which means it is nourishing to the blood and tissues. During their

child-bearing years, women lose blood each month and dong quai helps them replenish this loss. It is high in iron and helps improve blood flow, especially to the digestive organs and female reproductive system. Studies have validated its traditional uses in treating PMS symptoms, including breast tenderness, constipation and dizziness. It also excels in regulating the period, treating amenorrhea and cramps, but can also be helpful as a tonic for women during and after menopause. Dose is 2 capsules 2-3 times daily.

### Cordyceps

*Cordyceps sinensis* is a fungus that grows on caterpillars in high mountain areas. The adaptogenic and health-promoting benefits of cordyceps make it one of the most highly prized herbs in both Tibetan and Chinese medicine. Cordyceps is a jing tonic, which means it enhances the body's underlying energy reserves, giving it anti-aging and vitality strengthening properties. One study done on this herb suggested that it enhances production of mitochondrial adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the universal energy molecule that powers cellular functions.



Research shows that cordyceps can enhance athletic performance, reduce fatigue and balance blood sugar levels, making it another useful tonic for people who have diabetes or metabolic syndrome. It enhances lung health and is a very useful tonic for anyone with chronic lung diseases like COPD and asthma. Dose is 2 capsules twice daily.

### Astragalus

Astragalus root is categorized as a superior herb in *The Yellow Emperor's Classic*, a 2,000 year-old herbal text. It is a master herb for tonifying the qi, especially in the digestive system and lungs. Like echinacea, astragalus is very helpful for boosting the immune system by stimulating white blood cells to gobble up invading viruses. It increases both the number and aggressiveness of macrophages, promotes antibody production and the release of interferon, which signals the body to destroy viruses. It is often used in China during the winter months to ward off illness. Dose is 2 capsules 3-4 times daily.

### Noni Root (Morinda)

Also known as morinda, the root of the noni tree is a jing tonic, helping to replenish kidney vitality and sexual energy. It is used for impotence, premature ejaculation, back pain, arthritis, osteoporosis and muscle weakness. This tonic is found in **Nature's Noni**, but not Noni Juice. Dose is 2 capsules 2-3 times daily.

### He Shou Wu

A jing and blood tonic, with abilities to calm shen, he shou wu has a long standing reputation as an anti-aging herb. It has a reputation of being able to restore color to gray hair. It nourishes kidney and liver function and helps to maintain healthy bowel function. It can be helpful for normalizing cholesterol, balancing thyroid function and reducing the risk of cancer and heart disease. He Shou Wu also has the ability to strengthen the muscles and tendons and is beneficial for the nerves. It has been used for backaches, knee joint pain, neurasthenia and to lower blood pressure. Dose is 2-3 capsules three times daily.



# Valuable Chinese Tonic Formulas

As is often the case, tonic herbs may have greater benefits when used as part of a formula. The following traditional Chinese herbal formulas act as tonics to overall health, as well as to specific organs and body functions.

## Spleen Activator

This formula is a qi tonic that acts primarily on the digestive system. It helps restore the ability to digest and metabolize food in people who are thin, pale, underweight or lack muscle tone. Loss of digestive powers are common as people age, and this formula helps restore those digestive powers so they can derive the protein, minerals and other nutrients necessary to build healthy muscles, bones and connective tissues.

Spleen Activator's primary ingredients are Korean ginseng and astragalus root, but it also contains a small amount of dong quai. This means it will also help to balance blood sugar and enhance immune activity, as well as aid digestion.

Dose is 3 capsules of the regular formula with each meal or 1 capsule of the concentrate twice daily.

## Blood Stimulator

This formula is a blood tonic and contains the major tonic herbs typically given to women during their childbearing years in TCM. It helps increase blood volume and flow, combats anemia, scanty menstruation and fatigue. It can also help to resolve menstrual problems and PMS, as well as helping to reduce high blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol. It enhances immunity, aids in chronic liver problems and softens hard masses.



The primary tonic in Blood Stimulator is ganoderma (reishi) mushroom, a shen tonic in TCM with adaptogenic properties that calm the emotions, reduce stress and agitation, protect the liver and strengthen the heart. Ganoderma normalizes immune activity, making it useful for nutritive support in cancer, infections and auto-immune disorders. Other tonic herbs in Blood Stimulator include dong quai, astragalus and he shou wu.

Dose is 3 capsules of the regular formula with each meal or 1 capsule of the concentrate twice daily.

## KB-C

KB-C is primarily a jing tonic that builds the kidney energy, promoting sexual vitality, endurance and bone and muscle health. It can be helpful for broken bones, arthritis, backache, weak and brittle bones (osteoporosis), constipation, frequent urination (irritable bladder), chronic back problems, weak knees and ankles, kidney inflammation, kidney stones, prostate swelling, impotence, fatigue and insomnia due to waking up frequently to urinate.

KB-C contains three jing tonics: morinda, eucommia and epimedium. Morinda was discussed on page two. Eucommia has been used to treat backache, painful urination, impotence, muscular weakness and osteoporosis. Epimedium, more commonly known as horny goat weed in the West, has been used for in TCM for

problems like impotence, back pain and arthritis. Other tonics in KB-C include dong quai and Korean ginseng.

Dose is 3 capsules of the regular formula with each meal or 1 capsule of the concentrate two or three times daily.

## Nervous Fatigue Formula

This tonic formula enhances the shen or heart energy. It's helpful for excessive stress and emotional "burn out." People who benefit from Nervous Fatigue Formula are typically tired and nervous, have difficulty sleeping, feel overwhelmed, vulnerable and "broken hearted", and lose sexual desire. They may also experience night sweats, have muddled thoughts, be emotionally sensitive and suffer from mental confusion and short-term memory loss. Nervous Fatigue Formula can help to enhance energy, improve sleep, aid mental function and reduce the body's response to stress.



The key tonic herb in this formula is schizandra fruit, which is a tonic for qi, shen and jing. Schizandra is an adaptogen with hepatoprotective properties. It calms the shen, relieving insomnia, heart palpitations and impaired memory. It tones the jing to prevent night sweats and frequent urination. It is also helpful for dry cough, asthma, improving athletic performance and protecting the heart from oxidative stress. Nervous Fatigue also contains the tonics dong quai, astragalus and Korean ginseng.

Dose is 3-4 capsules of the regular formula with each meal or 1 capsule of the concentrate two or three times daily. It can also be taken when a person wakes up at night and can't seem to go back to sleep.

## Lung Support

Lung Support is a qi tonic that primarily acts on the lungs, but also benefits the immune system. It is useful for people who suffer from chronic infections of the lungs, frequent colds and flu, dry cough, tightness in the chest, shortness of breath, and general weakness and fatigue. It can also be helpful for chronic lung diseases, including emphysema, tuberculosis, chronic asthma or bronchitis, and lungs that have been damaged or weakened by smoking. People who are unnaturally thin, suffer from weak muscles and energy loss or who are pale with flushed cheeks may also find this formula helpful.

**Continued on page 4**

## Additional Help and Information

For more information about the health benefits of tonic herbs, contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following sources:

*The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products, 6th Edition* by Steven Horne and Kimberly Balas

*Healing with Chinese Herbs* by Steven Horne

*Herbal Therapy and Supplements* by Merrily A. Kuhn and David Winston

*Chinese Traditional Herbal Medicine* by Michael and Lesley Tierra



## Tonic Herbs: Superior Medicine for Restoring Your Health

Western people tend to believe that the best medicines are fast-acting drugs that quickly relieve symptoms (like pain or indigestion) or make specific changes in the body (such as lowering blood pressure or cholesterol). In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) these types of remedies are considered inferior medicines.

In TCM, superior medicines are slow-acting remedies that act without side effects to gradually improve overall health and vitality. In the west, we call these health-building remedies tonics. In this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*, we'll discuss some major tonic herbs and formulas and how they can increase your energy, improve your resistance to disease, slow the aging process and otherwise build good health.

### **Chinese Tonic Formulas** **Continued from page 1**

The primary tonic in Lung Support is astragalus, which not only supports lung health, it also helps to boost immunity and act as an adaptogen. Lung Support also contains atractylodes, a superior tonic that aids the digestion and removes stagnation from the digestive tract. The formula also contains the tonic herbs Korean ginseng, dong quai and schizandra.

Dose is 3 capsules of the regular formula with each meal or 1 capsule of the concentrate twice daily.

### **Trigger Immune**

This blend is a major tonic for both qi and blood, but also benefits shen and jing, making it a superior tonic for the entire body. It is used for people who have been run down and depleted by chronic stress or illness and is useful for people who feel exhausted



and burned out, have extremely poor resistance to disease or are depleted from chemotherapy or radiation treatments for cancer. Trigger Immune enhances blood circulation and immune responses, reduces stress and helps the body repair following surgery, injury, long-term stress or prolonged illness.

It contains many of the superior tonic herbs we have already discussed, including astragalus, Korean ginseng, epimedium, eucommia, ganoderma, dong quai, atractylodes and schizandra. The many tonic herbs in Trigger Immune give it powerful nourishing properties for depleted or elderly people.

Dose is 3 capsules of the regular formula with each meal or 1 capsule of the concentrate twice daily.