

Chinese Medicine Board of Australia

USER GUIDE:
NOMENCLATURE COMPENDIUM OF
COMMONLY USED HERBS AND
OTHER INGREDIENTS IN CHINESE
MEDICINE

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Background

The Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (CMBA) works in partnership with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) to ensure the public has access to qualified and competent Chinese medicine practitioners.

A key aspect of Chinese medicine practice is using *pin yin* names of herbs (and other medicinal substances) to support accurate prescription writing, labelling and dispensing of herbal medicines. Other names such as the scientific name, pharmaceutical name or name in Chinese characters can be used in addition to the *pin yin* name.

To support practitioners to prescribe accurately, the CMBA commissioned the National Institute of Complementary Medicine to produce and update a *Nomenclature compendium of commonly used herbs and other ingredients in Chinese medicine* (the Compendium). The Compendium can be viewed on the [CMBA website](#) where it can be downloaded. The version published on the [CMBA website](#) is the authorised, current version and is updated each year.

For ease of reference, the Compendium has been ordered alphabetically by *pin yin* name. Other names for the herbs and additional information such as safety warnings can be found by viewing each entry or by sorting the Compendium. A description of the information contained in each column, and instructions for some common types of searches are provided in this guide.

Nomenclature compendium of commonly used herbs and other ingredients in Chinese medicine

As outlined in Appendix 2 of the [Guidelines for safe Chinese herbal medicine practice](#) Chinese medicine nomenclature is complex and in some cases more than one name for a species or subspecies has come into use. Inconsistencies such as alternative names create risks in providing and sharing information such as for prescribing and dispensing herbal formulations or reporting and collating adverse events.

The *Nomenclature compendium of commonly used herbs and other ingredients in Chinese medicine* was developed to minimise the risks, and has several aims:

1. It provides a single *pin yin* name for a single herb to ensure consistency when prescribing, dispensing and labelling in Chinese medicine.
2. Where alternative scientific or other names have evolved, these are provided together with the reference source to enable users to identify the alternative nomenclature.
3. It identifies those materials, or in some cases the amount of a material, which cannot be used in Chinese medicine in Australia because they are included in a schedule of the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons (SUSMP) which is managed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration. If a substance is included in the SUSMP, it is either prohibited from use or its supply is restricted to a pharmacy or its use is restricted to a registered medical practitioner or to other registered practitioners endorsed to use certain scheduled substances.
According to SUSMP, poisons are classified according to the Schedules (1-10) in which they are included. In addition, some substances in certain circumstances are also subject to exemptions or additional restrictions as described in the Appendices of this Standard (A-M). Appendices assist in determining whether or not a substance is captured in a schedule and if it is, what other controls apply. The detailed description of the Schedules and Appendices could be found in the Poison Standard February 2021: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021C00098>.
4. It identifies those materials where trade and use is restricted or banned under the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna* (CITES). Note that the Compendium only identifies materials subject to a CITES notation and gives the link to the relevant CITES appendix. Please refer to the entry in the Australian CITES appendix to determine the type of restriction on use of that material in Australia. For example, while some herbs collected in the wild are

banned, cultivated (farmed) herbs with appropriate documentation may be exempt. Note that the Australian CITES listing is used in this Compendium (see full reference on [page 9](#)) and may be different from the global listing.

5. The Compendium is designed to make clear the naming conventions for almost 800 of the Chinese herbal medicines listed in the *Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China* (PPRC). It does not cover every substance used in Chinese herbal medicine.

Note

1. All information has been sourced from the current PPRC: Chinese Pharmacopoeia Commission. *Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China* [Zhong Hua Ren Min Gong He Guo Yao Dian], [中华人民共和国药典]. Beijing: China Medical Science Press (Chinese Edition).

Unless otherwise indicated by the superscript letter following the entry as follows:

- a Bensky, D., Clavey, S., and Stöger, E. (2004). *Chinese herbal medicine: Materia medica* (3rd ed.). Eastland Press; Seattle, WA.
 - b State of Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ed. (1999). *Chinese Materia Medica* [Zhong Hua Ben Cao], [中华本草]. Shanghai Scientific and Technology Publisher, Shanghai.
 - c Jiangsu New Medical College, 5th Ed. (1992). *Dictionary Traditional Drugs* [Zhong Yao Da Ci Dian], [中药大辞典]. Shanghai: Shanghai Scientific and Technical Publishers, Shanghai.
2. The Compendium is updated annually. Accordingly, caution needs to be exercised in relying on the information contained in this Compendium on the status of medicines under the poisons standard – SUSMP or CITES, as it may become outdated. The information in the Compendium is true and complete to the best of the CMBA's knowledge at the time of publication, but neither the CMBA nor Ahpra warrant this, and the CMBA and Ahpra disclaim all liability in connection with the use of the Compendium.

For confirmation of the status of medicines, please visit the following:

- The SUSMP on the Therapeutic Goods Administration website at www.tga.gov.au/publication/poisons-standard-susmp.
- CITES on their website at www.cites.org/eng.

Note: The reference used for this Compendium is the Australian list of CITES species for the purposes of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999. For detailed information see: www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017C00211.

Definitions used in Compendium columns

Pin yin name: Name of the herb (or other medicinal substance), according to the official phonological system for transcribing the Mandarin pronunciations of Chinese characters into the Latin alphabet. Additional names in common use are included in parentheses.

Simplified Chinese characters: Name of the herb (or other medicinal substance) written in standardised Chinese characters as prescribed in the Xiandai Hanyu Tongyong Zibiao 现代汉语通用字表, (*List of commonly used characters in modern Chinese*), for use in mainland China. Additional names in common use are included in parentheses.

Simplified character keystrokes: In order to facilitate searches for Chinese names, the number of strokes used to write the first simplified Chinese character is provided for the *Simplified Chinese Characters* column.

See Xiandai Hanyu Tongyong Zibiao 现代汉语通用字表, (*List of commonly used characters in modern Chinese*), for use in mainland China.

Traditional Chinese characters: Name of the herb (or other medicinal substance) written in traditional Chinese characters. Additional names in common use are included in parentheses. Traditional characters are characters included in any character set that does not contain newly created characters or character substitutions performed after 1946. They are listed in the standardised character sets of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau and in the Kangxi Dictionary, 康熙字典:

See: Taiwan Department of Health. (2013). *Taiwan Herbal Pharmacopoeia (2nd Edition)* electronic version [Tai Wan Zhong Yao Dian], [臺灣中藥典].

Traditional character keystrokes: In order to facilitate searches for Chinese names, the number of strokes used to write the first traditional Chinese character is provided for the *Traditional Chinese Characters* column.

See: Xinhua Dictionary Society. (2002). *Xinhua Dictionary (11th Edition)* [Xin Hua Ci Dian], [新華詞典]. Beijing: Commercial Press.

Scientific name: Refers to the scientific name(s) of the herb according to the same source(s) as indicated in *Pin yin name* column. This includes the species name (Latin binomial) and author citation(s).

Pharmaceutical name: Refers to the pharmaceutical name of the herb according to the same source(s) as indicated in *Pin yin name* column. This includes the Latinised name of the plant and plant part.

Chinese species name: Refers to the Chinese species name of the plant, fungus, animal or mineral according to same source as indicated in *Pin yin name* column.

Common English name: Refers to the common name of the herb according to the same source(s) as indicated in *Pin Yin name* column. These names may differ from the common names generally used in the English language.

Type of substance (plant, fungus, animal and/or mineral): Refers to whether the herb (or other medicinal substance) is categorised as a plant, fungus, animal and/or mineral.

Restriction/ warning: Contains information relating to any restriction on use or access (e.g. endangered species restrictions). The source of information is indicated in each cell as follows:

- The SUSMP on the Therapeutic Goods Administration website at www.tga.gov.au/publication/poisons-standard-susmp.
- CITES on their website at www.cites.org/eng.

Note: The reference used for this Compendium is the Australian list of CITES species for the purposes of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999. For detailed information see: www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017C00211.

Orange colour coding indicates herbs that have potential SUSMP and/or CITES issues. Full descriptions of the SUSMP schedules and CITES restrictions are presented on the last page of this user guide.

Terms used in the Compendium

Forms of processing

This table lists the typical processing methods used in preparing herbs. These terms may appear as a prefix (i.e. in front of) the main herb name, or as a suffix (i.e. after) the main herb name. In some cases, the processed form of the herb is listed separately in the Compendium. This depends on whether or not the processed herb is listed separately in the PPRC.

Table 1: Common methods used in the processing of Chinese herbs

No.	Pin yin	Simplified Chinese characters	Simplified character keystrokes	Traditional Chinese characters	Traditional character keystrokes	English	Prefix/suffix
1	Chao	炒	8	炒	8	Dry fried	Prefix
2	Cu	醋	15	醋	15	Processed with vinegar	Prefix
3	Fa	法	8	法	8	Processed with liquorice and lime	Prefix
4	Duan	煨	13	煨	13	Calcinated	Prefix
5	Gan	干	3	乾	11	Dried	Prefix
6	Jiang	姜	9	薑	16	Processed with ginger and alum	Prefix
7	Jiao	焦	12	焦	12	Scorched	Prefix
8	Mi	蜜	14	蜜	14	Processed with honey	Prefix
9	Pao	炮	9	炮	9	Baked, blast-fried	Prefix
10	Tan	炭	9	炭	9	Charred	Suffix
11	Shu	熟	15	熟	15	Cooked	Prefix
12	Sheng	生	5	生	5	Unprocessed, fresh	Prefix
14	Zhi	制	8	製	8	Processed (using various methods)	Prefix
15	Zhi	炙	8	炙	8	Honey fried, fried with liquid adjuvant	Prefix

Note to users: When looking up herb in the Compendium, you should check to see if there is a processing method at the beginning of the main name.

References

Xu Chu jiang 徐楚江 (Chief ed) (1999) *Zhong yao pao zhi xue* 中药炮制学, 15th edition. Shanghai Science and Technology Press.

State of Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ed. (1999). *Chinese Materia Medica [Zhong Hua Ben Cao]*, [中华本草]. Shanghai Scientific and Technology Publisher, Shanghai.

Plant parts

This table lists the Chinese names of plant parts. These may comprise part of the commonly used herb name or be appended to the herb name.

Table 2: Terms for main parts of herbs that may be included in the herb name or added after the main name

No.	<i>Pin yin</i>	Simplified Chinese characters	Traditional Chinese characters	English
1	Rong	绒	絨	Stamen
2	Ye	叶	葉	Leaf
3	Guo	果	果	Seed, fruit
4	Gen	根	根	Rhizome, root
5	Pi	皮	皮	Root-bark, bark, peel
6	Ren	仁	仁	Seed, nut, fruit
7	Shen	参	參	Root
8	Zi	子	子	Seed, fruit
9	Jia	甲	甲	Shell, plastron
10	Hua	花	花	Flower
11	Su	酥	酥	Venom
12	Tui	蜕	蛻	Slough
13	Teng	藤	藤	Stem, vine
14	Ya	芽	芽	Sprout
15	Qiao	壳	殼	Shell
16	Mu	木	木	Stem, wood
17	You	油	油	Oil
18	Geng	梗	梗	Petiole, stem
19	Jiao	角	角	Pod, horn
20	Sui	穗	穗	Spike (flower)
21	He	核	核	Seed
22	Xin	心	心	Plumule, core
23	Jie	节	節	Node
24	Shen	萁	萁	Fruit
25	Zhi	枝	枝	Twig
26	Luo	络	絡	Mesh-like, sponge-like structure
27	Fen	粉	粉	Pollen, powder

Note to users: When looking up herb in the Compendium, you should check to see if there is a herb part at the end of the main name.

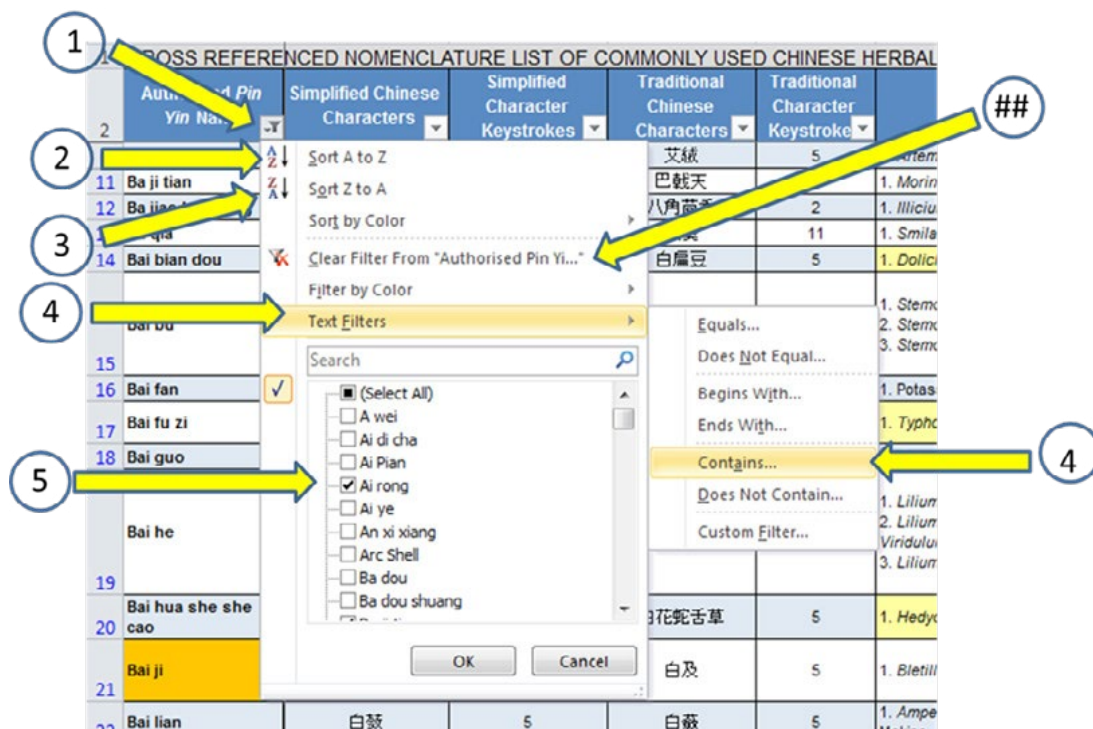
Reference

State of Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ed. (1999). *Chinese Materia Medica [Zhong Hua Ben Cao]*, [中华本草]. Shanghai Scientific and Technology Publisher, Shanghai.

Searching the Compendium

For ease of reference, this Compendium has been ordered alphabetically by *pin yin* name.

The list may be rearranged by each heading to suit individual requirements by clicking the **triangle in the bottom right hand corner of each column heading** (note, these changes will not be saved).



To see all options

Click the triangle in the bottom right corner of the column of interest to be searched/sorted/filtered.

Making selections

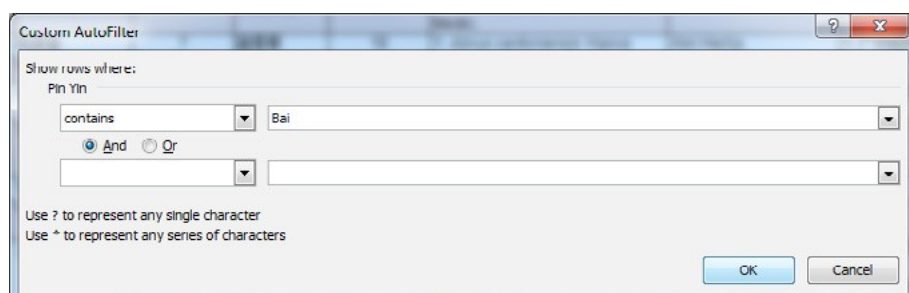
Sorting ingredients alphabetically

Click the triangle in header cell (bottom right hand corner of column heading of interest).

- Select **A->Z** to sort the whole sheet according to the selected column alphabetically from A to Z.
- Select **Z->A** to sort the whole sheet according to the selected column alphabetically from Z to A.

Selecting ingredients containing specific words

- Select **'Text filter'** to find entries containing individual words. From the options provided, select 'contains' and type word.



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E.g. filter for *Bai* in *Pin Yin* column. This will select for all names containing 'Bai'. To remove this filter, select 'clear filter from...' in same dropdown list.

2	Authorised <i>Pin Yin</i> name	Simplified Chinese Characters	Simplified Character Keystrokes	Traditional Chinese Characters
14	Bai bian dou	白扁豆	5	白扁豆
15	Bai bu	百部	6	百部
16	Bai fan	白帆	5	白帆
17	Bai fu zi	白附子	5	白附子
18	Bai guo	白果	5	白果
19	Bai he	百合	6	百合
20	Bai hua she she	白花蛇舌草	5	白花蛇舌草
21	Bai ji	白及	5	白及
22	Bai lian	白莲	5	白莲
23	Bai mao gen	白茅根	5	白茅根
	Bai qian	白前	5	白前

d. To filter for only certain entries, choose the tick boxes from the alphabetical list of entries for that column.

All entries for a single plant may be selected for by filtering according to 'Scientific name'. I.e. after clicking on the triangle in the header cell of 'Scientific name', check boxes next to species of interest (listed alphabetically). This will show the various preparation forms and parts of the same plant.

Steps:

- Clicking on the triangle in the header cell.
- Uncheck 'Select all'.
- Check the box next to ingredient of interest.
- Click 'ok'.

E.g. If *Perilla frutescens* (L.) Britt. selected from check boxes; the *pin yin* entries for *Zi su geng*, *Zi su ye*, *Zi su zi* are extracted from the table.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
<i>Pin Yin</i> Name	Simplified Chinese Characters	Simplified Character Keystrokes	Traditional Chinese Characters	Traditional Character Keystroke	Scientific Name	Pharmaceutical Name	Chinese Species Name	Common Engl
Zi su geng	紫苏梗	12	紫蘇梗	12	1. <i>Perilla frutescens</i> (L.) Britt.	Perillae Caulis	1. 紫苏	Perilla Stem
Zi su ye	紫苏叶	12	紫蘇葉	12	1. <i>Perilla frutescens</i> (L.) Britt.	Perillae Folium	1. 紫苏	Perilla Leaf
Zi su zi	紫苏子	12	紫蘇子	12	1. <i>Perilla frutescens</i> (L.) Britt.	Perillae Fructus	1. 紫苏	Perilla Fruit

e. **Sorting by keystrokes.** This is like using a Chinese dictionary. If you know the number of key strokes in the first character of the name of the herb, use the text filter and select this number. For example, if the herb name begins with 木, select 4 keystrokes. This will display all entries with this number of strokes.

Information from the SUSMP and CITES

SUSMP: Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons

For detailed information see: www.tga.gov.au/publication/poisons-standard-susmp.

S1 (Schedule 1): This Schedule is intentionally blank.

S2 (Schedule 2): Pharmacy medicine – The safe use of these substances may require advice from a pharmacist, which should be available from a pharmacy or, when a pharmacy service is not available, from a licensed person.

S3 (Schedule 3): Pharmacist only medicine – The safe use requires professional advice but the substances should be available to the public from a pharmacist without prescription.

S4 (Schedule 4): Prescription only medicine, or Prescription animal remedy – the use or supply of these substances should be by or on the order of people permitted by state or territory legislation to prescribe and should be available from a pharmacist on prescription.

S5 (Schedule 5): Caution - Substances with a low potential for causing harm, the extent of which can be reduced through the use of appropriate packaging with simple warnings and safety directions on the label.

S6 (Schedule 6): Poison - Substances with a moderate potential for causing harm, the extent of which can be reduced through the use of distinctive packaging with strong warnings and safety directions on the label.

S7 (Schedule 7): Dangerous Poison - Substances with a high potential for causing harm at low exposure and which require special precautions during manufacture, handling or use. These poisons should be available only to specialised or authorised users who have the skills necessary to handle them safely. Special regulations restricting their availability, possession, storage or use may apply.

S8 (Schedule 8): Controlled drug – Substances which should be available for use but require restriction of manufacture, supply, distribution, possession and use to reduce abuse, misuse and physical or psychological dependence.

S9 (Schedule 9): Prohibited substance – Substances which may be abused or misused, the manufacture, possession, sale or use of which should be prohibited by law except when required for

medical or scientific research, or for analytical, teaching or training purposes with approval of Commonwealth and/or state or territory health authorities.

S10 (Schedule 10, previously Appendix C): Substances of such danger to health as to warrant prohibition of sale, supply and use – substances which are prohibited for the purpose or purposes listed for each poison.

Appendix (A-M): Substances subject to exemptions or additional restrictions.

Appendix	Title	Purpose/controls
Appendix A	General exemptions	List of classes of products or uses exempted from this Standard.
Appendix B	Substances considered not to require control by scheduling	List of poisons exempted from scheduling.
Appendix C	Appendix is intentionally left blank	See Schedule 10.
Appendix D	Additional controls on possession or supply of poisons included in Schedule 4 or 8	List of poisons included in Schedule 4 or 8 where additional specified controls apply on possession or supply.
Appendix E	First aid instructions for poisons	First aid instructions for poisons (other than agricultural and veterinary chemicals and chemicals packed and sold solely for industrial, dispensary, manufacturing or laboratory use).
Appendix F	Warning statements and general safety directions for poisons	Warning statements and general safety directions for poisons (other than human medicines, agricultural and veterinary chemicals and chemicals packed and sold solely for industrial, dispensary, manufacturing or laboratory use).
Appendix G	Dilute preparations	Concentration cut-offs for specified poisons, below which the

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Requirements of the
Standard do not apply



Appendix H	Schedule 3 medicines permitted to be advertised	List of medicines included in Schedule 3 that are permitted to be advertised to the public.
Appendix I	Appendix is intentionally left blank	
Appendix J	Conditions for availability and use of Schedule 7 poisons	List of poisons included in Schedule 7 where additional specified conditions apply to their availability and use.
Appendix K	Human medicines required to be labelled with a sedation warning	List of human medicines required to be labelled with a warning regarding their sedation potential.
Appendix L	Requirements for dispensing labels for medicines	Requirements applying to labels attached to medicines at the time of dispensing.
Appendix M	Additional controls or supply requirements for Poisons included in Schedule 3 to allow them to be provided by a pharmacist	The substance and proposed intervention/additional requirement(s).

Appendix II – Lists species that are not necessarily currently threatened with extinction, but which may become so unless trade is closely controlled. It also includes so-called ‘look- alike species’, i.e. species whose specimens in trade look like those of species listed for conservation reasons (see Article II, paragraph 2 of the Convention). International trade in specimens of Appendix-II species may be authorised by the granting of an export permit or re-export certificate. No import permit is necessary for these species under CITES (although a permit is needed in some countries that have taken stricter measures than CITES requires). Permits or certificates should only be granted if the relevant authorities are satisfied that certain conditions are met, above all that trade will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild. (See Article IV of the Convention).

Appendix III – A list of species included at the request of a party that already regulates trade in the species and that needs the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation (see Article II, paragraph 3, of the Convention). International trade in specimens of species listed in this Appendix is allowed only on presentation of the appropriate permits or certificates. (See Article V of the Convention).

Note: The reference used for this Compendium is the Australian list of CITES species for the purposes of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999. For detailed information see: www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017C00211.

CITES: The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (appendices I, II and III, valid from 4 April 2017)

For detailed information see: www.cites.org/eng.

Appendix I – Lists species that are the most endangered among CITES-listed animals and plants (see Article II, paragraph 1 of the Convention). They are threatened with extinction and CITES prohibits international trade in specimens of these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial (see Article III), for instance for scientific research. In these exceptional cases, trade may take place provided it is authorised by the granting of both an import permit and an export permit (or re-export certificate). Article VII of the Convention provides for a number of exemptions to this general prohibition.