

Dahurian Angelica root 白芷 - An Introduction



This Chinese medicinal herb 'Bai Zhi' (白芷), takes after many names. To name a few, it is also known as the Chinese Angelica, the Garden Angelica, Root of the Holy Ghost and Wild Angelica. This Chinese herb has been around since ancient times and has lived through lengthy medicinal history in China. Though well known as a Chinese herb, various species of Angelica can be found as wild undergrowth not only in China, but also Japan, Korea, Russia and Europe. The Angelica dharuhian is also resident to the mountains

between Japan and East Siberia. With such a vast number of medicinal properties, 'Bai Zhi's' history has furthermore linked this root to Native American tribes who chewed on this very root to treat colds and aid them in their stomach disorders. In Europe, folklore tells us tales that this root was once used in the 1600s to ward off evil.

Due to its remedial and therapeutic properties, 'Bai zhi' is still cultivated primarily throughout central and eastern China till this day. Dating back 400 B.C, this herb is still commonly used in Chinese medicine around the world now.

Like all other Angelica herbs, it is best to plant fresh seeds once available. The seeds of 'bai zhi' need to be sown in a cold frame immediately from time of ripeness, in deep moist fertile soil in order to germinate. The root of this herb is usually harvested in the spring when the plant is matured and then placed under the sun to be dried and stored for later use. The mature Angelica dharuhian extends to about 1 to 2 meters tall, with its stem 4 to 7cm in diameter and its leaves aromatic with a yellowish-green coloration. In the warm summer air, 'bai zhi' also blooms greenish-white flowers. Being a Perennial herb, this Angelica dharuhian grows back naturally on its own, year after year, unlike other plants that require seeds to grow.

Bai Zhi's medicinal properties are used to treat a great number of things, but most commonly used to ease cold symptoms such as headaches, sinuses, and fever. In addition it is frequently used to alleviate pain, reduce swelling and treat various skin disorders. In traditional folklore, 'Bai Zhi' was used to reveal cancer and to relieve toothaches. Because the Chinese Angelica root is a tonic that has anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties, it is also widely used to treat dry, red and irritated skin, including boils, sores and ulcers.