

SCHIZANDRA



Schizandra (*Schizandra chinensis*) is a creeping vine with small red berries that is native to Northern China. In ancient China, Schizandra was used as a staple food for hunting and gathering tribes. As a traditional medicinal herb, Schizandra, called Wu-wei-tzu in China, has been used as an astringent for a treatment for dry cough, asthma, night sweats, nocturnal seminal emissions and chronic diarrhea. It is also used as a tonic for the treatment of chronic fatigue.

During the early 1980's Chinese doctors began researching Schizandra as a treatment for hepatitis. Schizandra is now a recognized "adaptogen," capable of increasing the body's resistance to disease and stress. In Asia, this adaptogenic property is said to stimulate immune defenses, balance body function, normalize body systems, boost recovery after surgery, protect against radiation, counteract the effects of sugar, optimize energy in times of stress, increase stamina, protect against motion sickness, normalize blood sugar and blood pressure, reduce high cholesterol, shield against infection, improve the health of the adrenals, energize RNA-DNA molecules to rebuild cells and produces energy comparable to that of a young athlete.

Schisandra has long been used in the traditional medicines of Russia and China for a wide variety of conditions including asthma, coughs, and other respiratory ailments, diarrhea, insomnia, impotence, and kidney problems. Hunters and athletes have used schisandra in the belief that it will increase endurance and combat fatigue under physical stress.

Schizandra, also spelled Schisandra, is also known by the names Magnolia Vine and Fruit Of Five Flavors. Schizandra is a woody vine with numerous clusters of tiny, bright red berries. It is found throughout northern and northeast China and the adjacent regions of Russia and Korea. The fully ripe, sun-dried fruit is used medicinally. It has sour, sweet, salty, hot, and bitter tastes. This unusual combination of flavors is reflected in Schizandra's Chinese name "wu-wei-zi", meaning "five taste fruit".

Schizandra is currently popular worldwide as a tonic, and in Asia as a food source. Schizandra helps the body adapt to stress and nourishes the nervous system. Modern Chinese research suggests that lignans in Schizandra regenerate liver tissue damaged by harmful influences such as viral hepatitis and alcohol.