Coriander/Cilantro – *Coriandrum sativum*

Monograph completed by the CHA of BC Student Subcommittee, 2017
Ada Guna. Ashley Giordano. Petra Sovcovova, David Shaw

Also known as: Dhania (seed), Dhania sabz (leaves), Yuen sai and Pak chee.

As with any form of herbal medicine, the below information is not meant to replace medical advice or prescriptions from your MD. All information below is based off of Materia Medica texts and comes from published and historical sources.

Historically, Coriander seeds have been used in Indian cuisine, in curries or in chai. In the west its use dates back to the Middle Ages. Cilantro leaf and its cousin, Culantro, are used as a refreshing addition to Mexican dishes (Wood, 208).

**Parts Used:** leaves and seeds (Fresh and dried fruit)

**Actions:** Carminative, Aromatic, Antispasmodic, Stimulant, Anti inflammatory (mild), Antipruritic - leaf, Emollient - leaf, Antiemetic - seed, Muscle relaxant/Antispasmodic - leaf, Nutritive - magnesium, other minerals - leaf, Analgesic - seed oil

**Chemical Constituents:**
Seed: Malic Acid, Tannins
Seed oil: 60 - 70% linalool, sugars, alkaloids, flavones, resins, tannins, anthraquinones, sterols, and fixed oils.
Leaves: caffeic, ferulic, gallic and chlorogenic acids.

**Taste:** Leaf: bitter, pungent, sour, cool  
Fruit/Seed: bitter, pungent, warm, stimulating (Wood, 208)

**Tissue State:** Leaf: irritation (Wood, 208)  
Fruit: depression (Wood, 208)
What are its uses?

**Integumentary System (Skin):**
- Topically, Coriander seed oil produces very good antimicrobial and antibacterial activity, making it effective for shallow skin infections and oozing dermatitis.
- As a cooling agent, cilantro leaf can reduce urticaria, itching, rashes, and burns (Wood, 209).

**Mental Health:**
- Coriander seed has a long history of use in Iranian medicine for anxiety and insomnia.

**Respiratory System:**
- Cilantro leaf can be used in cases of allergies, hay fever, or a sore throat (Wood, 209).

**Digestive System:**
- *Coriander is beneficial for:* flatulence, colic, diarrhea (especially in children), dyspepsia, constipation, *H. Pylori,* aiding in the secretion of gastric juices and bruised seed can be applied externally as poultice for painful joints and Rheumatism. (Tierra, 1998)
- Cilantro leaf can help in the relief of vomiting and indigestion (Wood, 209).
- Coriander seed can prevent putrefaction in the stomach and intestines. It can help with acute or chronic indigestion. Other than expelling gas (flatulence, colic), it can also help in the pain of gaseous build-up in the body—bloating, soreness, hiccoughs, belching, and cramps (Wood, 209).
- Cilantro has been shown to have chelation properties of heavy metals like: mercury, lead and aluminum. The original findings by Dr. Omura were stumbled on by accident while studying antibiotics being ineffective in treating ear infections; it became clear the bacteria were using the heavy metals for protection. Dr. Omura began to test patients urine and noticed mercury was being excreted in higher concentrations after a meal was eaten that contained cilantro. (Ravensthorpe, 2014)

**Urinary/Renal System:**
- Cilantro Leaf is useful in the treatment of cystitis and a burning urethra (Wood, 209).

**Immune/Lymphatic System:**
- The seeds are used to bring coolness to hot stimulating food. When working with a relentless fever coriander seeds can be steeped to make a tea mixed with black pepper as a catalyst exhibiting diaphoretic properties to relieve the fever. Use two teaspoons and steep for 20 minutes. (McVicar, 2008)

**Musculoskeletal System:**
- Organic cilantro leaf is a concentrated source of magnesium, a mineral which aids in muscle relaxation and releases cramping muscles (Dean, 219).
- Coriander oil can be used to reduce muscle pain and cramps.

**Specific Diseases/States/Infections/Viruses/Bacteria:**
- A 2011 study found that coriander seeds decreased blood glucose levels and countered oxidative stress in individuals with non-insulin dependent (Type II) diabetes.

**Dosage:**

**Cold Infusion:** 1 tsp bruised seeds to 1 cup water. Allow the seeds to steep a long time, and do not boil them (Wood, 209). Drink before meals.

**Fresh Juice:** Juice cilantro leaf and drink (Wood, 209). Limit to 1 cup per day; this can be used as a gentle detox or laxative.

**Fresh herb:** (For chelation properties) Quarter cup of fresh herb per day for 2 weeks. Increase intake gradually. Ravensthorpe, 2014)

**Topical:** For burns, itching, and rashes, cilantro leaf can be chopped finely and applied to the affected area after disinfecting.
Coriander seed oil can be used topically to relieve muscle cramps and aches in athletes.

**Safety Concerns/Contraindications**

- If used at high doses the seeds are said to be narcotic
- The leaf should only be purchased “organic” as Cilantro holds on to many minerals and metals and can accumulate toxic heavy metals if poorly sourced.

**Recipe:**

**Rosemary Gladstar’s Medicinal Basil Pesto**

½ cup - 1 cup olive oil  
1 - 3 cloves garlic  
1 cup fresh cilantro leaves and stems  
½ cup fresh basil leaves  
½ c

You can make enough pesto to freeze in ice cube trays so you’ll have them available through the winter months!  
up fresh dandelion leaves  
½ - 1 cup pine nuts or walnuts  
¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan, Pecorino, or other hard cheese

Combine the olive oil, garlic, and fresh greens in a blender or food processor. Pulse until smooth. Add the nuts and cheese and pulse again, until the mixture reaches the desired consistency.

**References:**

Mrs M. Grieve (1973) *A Modern Herbal Revised Edition.* Merchant Book Company, Surrey UK  

Photos courtesy of:  
http://www.thenaturalherbalist.co.uk/product/coriander-leaves-cut/  
http://www.gardeninginfozone.com/growing-coriander-cilantro-coriandrum-sativum

*I made it:* http://www.iherb.org/117-2/?
Recipe:

Completed by the CHA of BC Student Subcommittee
- Ada Guna
- Ashley Giordano
- Petra Sovcovova
- David Shaw