

Periploca sepium Bunge Chinese Silk Vine Root Bark

Cortex Periplocae

Pinyin: Xiang jia pi

Asclepiadaceae

Periploca sepium is predominantly used in traditional Chinese medicine for arthritic conditions. It is also considered to be a relatively toxic botanical due to the presence of cardioactive properties. It is not commonly included in herbal supplements in the United States. However, it may occur as an adulterant of eleuthero (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*). For a differentiation of the two species, see entry for eleuthero.

Transverse section: Broad cork consisting of red-brown, rectangular, thin-walled cells, some of which contain calcium oxalate prisms; a region of thin-walled parenchyma cells—with abundant calcium oxalate prisms up to 30 μm in length and shaped like anvils with some edges conspicuous and others having very poor contrast—is between the cork and secondary phloem; groups of yellow lignified sclereids and occasional white nonlignified fibers may be

found in this region; parenchyma and secondary phloem contain numerous laticifers up to 170 μm diameter; uniseriate, undulating medullary rays and some finely pitted cells; secondary phloem conducting cells often occur in cuneiform regions of homogeneous parenchyma; thin-walled parenchyma, irregular in size and shape, with frequent calcium oxalate prisms; sclereids may occur in outer secondary phloem; starch is present in all parenchyma.

Longitudinal section: Articulated laticifers, oriented generally in the axial direction but with some bends and curves that cause them often to appear irregular in shape; latex droplets; calcium oxalate prisms in conspicuous axial rows.

Starch: Granules are usually simple, subspherical, very small (2–8 μm diameter).

Powder: Fragments of cork; parenchyma; laticifers; calcium oxalate prisms; latex droplets; sclereids and fibers may be present; starch.

