Bupleurum falcatum
[boo-PLUR-rum fal-KAY-tum]
(syn Bupleurum chinensis, Bupleurum scorzoneraefolium)

Family: Umbelliferae

Names: Thorow-wax, sickle-leaved hare’s ear, hare’s ear root, chai hu (Chinese); Buplèvre en faux (French); Misima-Saiko, Sikkelgoudscherm; Bupleurum-Wurzel, Chinesische (German)

Description: slender perennial with a woody rootstock, hollow stems, obovate basal leaves and narrow stem leaves. Umbels of tiny yellow flowers are borne from midsummer to autumn. Height of 1-3 feet and width of 12-24 inches. It is hardy to zone 3. It is in flower from July to October. The flowers are hermaphrodite and are pollinated by insects. The plant is self-fertile.

Cultivation: An easily cultivated plant, it succeeds in a sunny position in most fertile well-drained soils. Seed - sow spring in a cold frame. The seed usually germinates in 2 - 8 weeks at 47°F. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle and plant them out in the summer or following spring. Division in spring. Very easy, larger clumps can be planted direct into their permanent positions. It is best to pot up smaller clumps and grow them on in a cold frame until they are well rooted before planting them out in the summer. Roots are lifted in autumn and used fresh or dried for decoctions.

Constituents: furfurol, sterol, bupleurumol, triterpenoid saponins (saikosides-saikosaponins), flavonoids (rutin)

Properties: antipyretic, diaphoretic, carminative, alterative, hepotropic, anti-inflammatory, tonic, antiviral, Alterative; Analgesic; Antibacterial; Antiperiodic; Diaphoretic; Emmenagogue; Hemolytic; Pectoral; Sedative.

Energetics: pungent, bitter, cool

Meridians/Organs affected: liver, pericardium, triple warmer, gall bladder

Medicinal Uses: Internally used for malaria, blackwater fever, uterine and rectal prolapse, herpes simplex, hemorrhoids, sluggish liver associated with mood instability, menstrual disorders and abdominal bloating. Often used raw with wine for feverish illnesses, with
vinegar as a circulatory stimulant, and mixed with tortoise blood for malaria. First mentioned in Chinese medical texts around AD200, it is one of the most important Chinese herbs for treating the liver because it acts on diseases of a mixed conformation, both internal and chronic and both external and acute, both hot and cold, both deficient and excess. It is one of the major chi regulating or carminative herbs that help regulate moodiness. It has a strong ascending energy, so that it is also added in small amounts to tonic formulas to raise the yang-vitality, treat organ prolapse and raise sagging spirits. It is used for hepatitis and all liver disorders and to help resolve and bring out eruptic diseases. One of the peculiarities of Bupleurum is its capacity to ‘dredge’ out old emotions of sadness and anger that may be stored in the organs and tissues of the body.

The root contains saikosides. These saponin-like substances have been shown to protect the liver from toxicity whilst also strengthening its function, even in people with immune system disorders. These saikosides also stimulate the body's production of corticosteroids and increase their anti-inflammatory affect. The plant is often used in preparations with other herbs to treat the side effects of steroids. Promising new research out of China and Japan has shown Bupleurum's ability to protect the adrenal glands from steroid-induced atrophy.

In Ayurvedic medicine it would be considered to be anti-kapha and anti-pitta but pro-vata. Ayurvedic doctors do not normally used this herb but a combination of turmeric and barberry root.

**TCM:** This herb is also very well known for its sedative action, especially in the patented medicine Xiao Yao Wan (Bupleurum Sedative Pills). It is also effective for women with menstrual problems associated with premenstrual syndrome (PMS). It is one of the best Chinese herbs for treating serious liver disorders, such as hepatitis and cirrhosis, particularly when combined with other specific liver herbs.

**Specific Indication:** Hepatitis with liver enlargement & pain in upper right quadrant; Acute/chronic liver disease, Chemical liver damage, poor liver function, Hepatomegaly &/or splenomegaly, chronic hepatitis, Chronic inflammatory disorders, esp. auto-immune disease, Acute infections, common cold, chills, fever, chronic cough, Irregular menstruation, Indigestion, Malaria, Asthma, Hemorrhoids (TCM = prolapse is due to spleen energy deficiency)

**Incompatibles:** Gleditschia chinensis

**Dosage:** 3-12ml/day of a 1:2 fluid extract/day.

**Toxicity:** Bupleurum should not be used by those with depleted fluids, those with liver yang rising, those with extreme headaches, or those with such eye diseases as conjunctivitis.

**Other Uses:** The old plant is used as a fuel.

**Culinary Uses:** Leaves and young shoots - cooked. The new growth in spring and autumn is used. It is a good source of rutin.

**References:**
Plants for a Future Database

**Sources:**
Crimson Sage, [http://www.crimson-sage.com](http://www.crimson-sage.com)

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