**HONEYSUCKLE**

**Lonicera japonica**  
[luh-NIS-er-uh juh-PON-ih-kuh]

*Description:* The vine grows to 30 feet in length. The stems are slightly hairy. The two to three inch leaves, which grow opposite on the stems, have a somewhat narrow heart shape. The leaves are deep green, often downy below, but less commonly downy above. The flowers appear in May and continue to bloom sporadically through late summer. Flowers are trumpet-shaped, growing in pairs. The flowers start off white, occasionally tinged purple, and turn buff yellow as they mature. It’s better to find it and harvest the flowers than grow it because it will spread rapidly and most literature is on how to control it.

**History:** The name honeysuckle or *honysockle* comes from the delight that children (and faeries) took in sucking the nectar from the flowers. The Romans called it *caprifolium,* probably because goats (*capri*) liked to eat the leaves (*folium*). The berries have been used as food for chickens. Imported into America from Japan around the turn of the century. It was recommended as a decorative climber and is now considered a pernicious weed. In the Victorian language of flowers, honeysuckle denotes affection. In the Middle Ages, a syrup of honeysuckle was used to fight fever. The berries are poisonous. A honeysuckle wash was traditionally used to clear the complexion of freckles and sunburn.

**Constituents:** volatile oil (includes linalool and jasmone), a bitter compound (sylosteine), luteolin, inositol, tannin, pectin, sugars

**Properties:** alterative, antibiotic, diuretic, refrigerant, diaphoretic, emetic

**Lonicera caprifolium**  
[luh-NIS-er-uh kap-rih-FOH-lee-um]  
(red/white) is the Italian honeysuckle more commonly seen

**Family:** Caprifoliaceae

**Names:** Woodbine; Chèvre-feuille, Chèvrefeuille des jardins (French); Geisblatt, Gartengeissblatt (German); Capri-foglio (Italian); kinginka (Japanese); kumunhwa (Korean); jin yin hua, yin hua, ren dong hua, shuang hua, er bao hua (Chinese). For L. japonica: Japanese honeysuckle, Hall’s honeysuckle; honekakala
**Medicinal:** The Chinese use honeysuckle flowers extensively to treat sore throat, colds, flu, tonsillitis, bronchitis and pneumonia. Honeysuckle flower extracts are strongly active against many microorganisms that cause sore throat and respiratory conditions. It has broad spectrum antimicrobial activity against salmonella typhi, pseudomonas aeruginosa, staphylococcus aureus and streptococcus pneumoniae. It’s considered the echinacea of Chinese medicine. It’s also been shown to have an inhibitory effect with tuberculosis. A suggested help is making a tea with a handful of flowers per cup of oiling water and drinking up to three cups a day. The bark is diuretic and may be taken to relieve gout, kidney stones and liver problems. In winter a decoction of twigs and dried leaves can be drunk adding lemon and honey for flavor. The leaves are astringent and make a good gargle and mouthwash for sore throats and canker sores. The FDA has not put honeysuckle on its GRAS list.

**Energetics**—Sweet, bitter, cold

**Meridians/Organs affected:** Lung, stomach

**CHINESE MEDICINE:** Clears heat and relieves fire toxicity: for hot, painful sores and swellings in various stages of development, especially of the breast, throat, or eyes. Also for intestinal abscess. Expels externally-contracted wind-heat: for the early stages of warm-febrile diseases with such symptoms as fever, slight sensitivity to wind, sore throat, and headache. Also for externally-contracted summer heat. Clears damp-heat from the lower burner: for damp-heat dysenteric disorder or painful urinary dysfunction.

**REMEDIES:** In summer, boil a cup of flowers in a cup of water, then strain the tea before drinking. Taken in combination with forsythia is even better. In winter make a tea of the twigs and sweeten it with lemonade powder. Use for colds and flu.

**Dosage:** decoction: 5-10 grams, in two doses, on an empty stomach

**FLOWER ESSENCE:** Used for nostalgia, emotional attachment to the past, longing for what was. The soul needing Honeysuckle stifles life force and denies its true evolution by living too much in past events, places and relationships.

**Cosmetic Use:** From the flowers of both species, collected at eventide, a lotion is made which cleanses the skin of impurities and leaves it soft and clear.

**Ritual:** Gender—Hot; Planet—Jupiter; Element—Earth; Use for awareness, good fortune, financial stability, protection of health and friendship. Ring green candles with the flowers to attract money. Add to all prosperity sachets. Lightly crush the fresh flowers and rub on the forehead to heighten clairvoyance powers.

**Recipes:**

**Honeysuckle Strawberry Sorbet**

- ½ cup honeysuckle flowers
- 3 cups strawberries, cleaned, hulled and cut in half

Cut pistils and stamens out of honeysuckle flower, being careful not to remove the nectar at the base of the flower. Put flowers and strawberries into the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade. Process until smooth. Pour mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer’s directions. Serve garnished with several honeysuckle flowers. (Edible Flowers from Garden to Palate)

**Chicken in a Melon with Honeysuckle**

- 4 Ogen, Charentais or Galia melons
- 8 oz cooked chicken, diced (2 cups)
- 1 cup white grapes, peeled and seeded
- 3 Tbsp honeysuckle flowers
- 5/8 cup mayonnaise

honesuckle sprigs to garnish

Halve the melons and discard the seeds. Scoop out the flesh with a melon baller and set aside. Turn the empty melon halves upside down and leave to drain. Mix together the diced chicken, grapes and honeysuckle with the
mayonnaise and pile the mixture into the drained melon shells. Chill well and serve topped with a sprig of honeysuckle (Cooking with Flowers)

**Honeyed Honeysuckle**
1 gallon grape juice
2 cups honeysuckle blossoms
1½ cups orange juice
1 jasmine tea bag
¼ cup honey

Simmer all the ingredients in a large pot, warming very slowly over low heat until honey is fully dissolved. If the petals turn translucent before the honey is mixed, remove them and continue warming. Cool to room temperature, remove tea bag, strain, and chill. Shake well before serving. (A Witch’s Brew)

**Honeysuckle Jelly**
2 quarts ripe berries
½ cup of water
1 cup sugar per cup of juice
3 oz liquid pectin

Collect, sort and wash 2 quarts of fully ripened berries. Place into a saucepan, add ½ cup of water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and strain through a jelly bag. Recover the juice, measure, place into a saucepan and add 1 cup of granulated sugar to each cup of juice. Mix thoroughly and boil until sugar thoroughly dissolves. Add 3 oz of liquid pectin; boil for 1 full minute, stirring constantly. Skim off any foam, pour into hot, sterile jelly jars and seal. (Wild Preserves)

**Honeysuckle Jam**
2 quarts ripe berries
½ cup of water
1 cup of sugar per cup of pulp
3 oz liquid pectin

Wash and sort 2 quarts of fully ripened berries. Place in a saucepan and crush with a potato masher. Add ½ cup of cold water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes. Strain the mixture through a food mill. Recover, measure the juicy pulp, add 1 cup of granulated sugar to each cup of pulp and bring to a boil. Add 3 oz of liquid pectin and boil for 1 full minute. Skim off the foam, pour into hot, sterile jelly jars and seal. (Wild Preserves)

**Honeysuckle Serendipity**
4 cups honeysuckle blossoms
1 gallon water
6 cups sugar
juice and peel of 2 oranges
½ package wine yeast

Place the blossoms in a large crock. Heat half the water to just below boiling, then pour over the petals. Allow to sit until blossoms turn almost translucent. Strain and reheat slightly, then add sugar, orange juice, peel, and yeast. Pour into a fermentation container with a lock and let set until the liquid becomes clear. Strain out fruit, bottle, and store in cool, dark area for use. (A Witch’s Brew)

**Honeysuckle Pudding or Fruit Dip**
2 cups fresh picked and rinsed honeysuckle flowers
2 ½ cup milk
1/3 cups sugar
3 Tbsp cornstarch
¼ tsp salt

Heat milk slowly in saucepan; remove from heat. Add flowers to milk, cover and let set at least 1 hour to impart honeysuckle flavor to milk. Strain milk through sieve. In heavy saucepan, mix sugar, cornstarch and salt; add flavored milk and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until it thickens somewhat. Cook for another couple minutes; remove from heat and cool. To cool without skim forming on surface of pudding, cover with plastic wrap. Serve chilled as pudding or as a dip for fresh fruit. (The Charlotte Herb Guild Cooks)

**References:**

Sources
The Rosemary House, www.therosemaryhouse.com tincture