

## ***Scutellaria baicalensis* Georgi**

Lamiaceae

Source of: huáng qín 黄芩

Baikal skullcap root



### Summary Description

A full sun herbaceous perennial hardy to Zone 4 that prefers rock garden conditions (dry, alkaline, very well drained soil), and does not tolerate any standing moisture. The bright yellow root is one of the three huángs (yellows), the most well known cooling herbs in Chinese medicine. In its first or second year the much-branched stems will be erect to 12-15 inches in height, but the older plants will flop and sprawl to a 3-foot radius. The pairs of opposite narrow leaves, 0.5 to 1.5 inches in length, alternate in the foursquare pattern characteristic of the mint family. Stems are yellow-green when young and brown when older. The plant flowers vivid purplish blue on terminal racemes, July to August. The black-brown seeds are held inside the calyx and ripen in September.

### Propagation

Harvest ripe seed promptly from plants at least two years old. Hold in dry storage. In February, sow seed thinly in 72-cell deep trays filled with loose-textured potting medium, barely cover. Set trays under bright indirect light at 70°F, keep moist. Germination should occur in 14-21 days. Thin seedlings to one per cell. Minimize root disturbance.

### Cultivation

After the soil warms up, plant in very well drained, dry, alkaline, unamended soil at 18 inches apart. If weed-control mulch is needed, consider black plastic the first season, gravel or chopped straw. Clip brittle stems at season's end.

### Harvest & Processing

Dig roots after 3 or 4 years. Remove the thin brown skin, if present, with tumble washing. Check for black core rot, cut away. Select firm, yellow lengths of root, wash and slice in thin, uniform transverse or oblique pieces, dry at temperatures not exceeding 110°F.

### References

Flora of China: [http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora\\_id=2&taxon\\_id=200020285](http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=2&taxon_id=200020285)

Bensky *Materia Medica* page: 131

### Alternate species

*S. rehderiana*, *S. amoena*, *S. hypericifolia*

### Analog species

*S. lateriflora*



Garden at Finger Lakes School of AOM, Seneca Falls NY