



Huang Bai Harvest & Processing

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In 2009 at the High Falls Gardens field, a group of interns harvested the inner bark of a twelve-year-old Chinese cork tree.

The product is 黄柏 huáng bǎi, one of the three “huangs” or “yellows”, the most famous cooling herbs in traditional Chinese herbal medicine.

Two species, *Phellodendron chinense* Schneid. and *Phellodendron amurense* Rupr. are accepted for Huang Bai. They are fast-growing, long-lived trees with a beautiful corky outer bark and a bright yellow inner bark. I have studied the collection at the Arnold Arboretum at different times of the year, and have germinated seeds to produce saplings.

Zai Sheng Herbs growers have planted dozens of these trees on their farms and we hope to provide plenty of Huang Bai in future.

Meanwhile, here is the story of the 2009 harvest.

Phellodendron tree, Harvard's Arnold Arboretum

Logs 2-3 feet in length are cut.



Logs nearest the tree base will have thicker inner bark. We composted the remainder.



The corky outer bark is peeled away. This bark is beautiful and can be chopped up for a tough mulch or used in crafts.



The yellow inner bark is scored with a box cutter or sharp knife in regular, measured strips and peeled away.





The yellow strips may be cut into smaller, regular pieces. The goal is a decoction piece of consistent size and thickness.

The pieces are spread out to dry. These could have been spread out better but we did not have access to a professional-level herb dryer. An Excalibur will work for smaller quantities.

The goal is to dry quickly with maximum air flow and warm (90-100F) temperature. Slower drying will result in mold and discoloration.

In this 2009 experiment we did not use all the logs from one tree due to time constraints. But our final weight (what you see here) was 10 pounds dried, and sold for \$30 per pound.

