

The October 2019 Newsletter of The GP-TCM Research Association



Monthly Chinese Materia Medica Highlights

Safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius* L., Asteraceae, 红花, left) and saffron (*Crocus sativus* L., Iridaceae, 番红花 or 西红花, right)



Both safflower and saffron are multipurpose resource plants with high economic value. In Chinese *materia medica*, the dried tubular flower (not including ovary) of the former and the dried stigma of the latter are used as Chinese medicinal *honghua* and *xihonghua* respectively. Under the same category of medicinals that invigorate the blood and eliminate blood stasis, *honghua* unblocks menstruation and relieves pain, while *xihonghua* cools the blood, resolves toxicity, relieves stagnancy, and calms the mind.

The good agricultural practice of both plants is mature and successful. However, it takes 140,000~160,000 flowers to produce a single kilogram of saffron stigma. It seems that the total output of saffron is not able to meet the demand from herbal market and food industry, resulting in its higher price in commerce.

红花

红花欲垂未曾凋
独立风中分外娇
不与邻争香作罢
只为故里人逍遥

番红花

西域圣草番红花
涉水依香苦作涯
百载深闺犹是客
亭亭玉立贵邻家

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