

Nature's Field

An Electronic Journal for NSP Distributors

Bitter Orange

Fructus aurantia

By Steven H. Horne

The fruit of the bitter orange has long been used as a medicine in China. Known as zhi shi, it is considered a valuable chi regulator. It has traditionally been used for aiding digestion, its bitter and acrid taste being used to remove stagnation in the digestive tract and relieve gas and intestinal bloating. It also directs chi downward, helping to open up the bowel.

More recently, the Chinese have started using bitter orange to treat shock, heart conditions and cardiac exhaustion. It is also used to resolve phlegm, i.e., to loosen phlegm in the body and get it to move. It is particularly helpful for sticky yellow phlegm.

Bitter orange peel contains a volatile oil, flavonoids, coumarins, triterenes and vitamin C. The flavonoids in bitter orange are known to have anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and antifungal properties.

Recent research has shown that the unripe peel contains neohesperidin and five amines with adrenergic action (synephrine, N-methyltyramine, hordenine, octopamine, and tyramine). Adrenergic receptors are receptor sites for the sympathetic hormones and neurotransmitters epinephrine and norepinephrine. This means bitter orange acts as a stimulant to the body.

Synephrine is one of the key components here because it has a similar chemical structure to ephedrine (from Chinese ephedra which has been taken off the market). This makes bitter orange a good substitute for ephedra in respiratory formulas.

Bitter orange is also being used in weight loss formulas. Synephrine has been shown to increase resting metabolic rate more than ephedrine did. However, synephrine doesn't cross the blood-brain barrier to overstimulate the brain. Research also suggests that synephrine and the other amines in bitter orange only work on beta-3 receptor sites, which are primarily found in fat and liver tissue. Stimulation of these receptor sites increases breakdown of fat and raises metabolism. However, because these amines don't stimulate other adrenergic receptors as much, bitter orange does not affect the heart and blood pressure the way ephedra does. This means it helps burn fat

without overstimulating the heart. It can raise blood pressure slightly, but nowhere near as much as ephedra can.

Octopamine, another of these amines, appears to stop insects from eating the unripe peeling. In humans, octopamine causes the pituitary to secrete growth hormone, which contributes to tissue repair and muscle growth. Whether the effect is strong enough with the herb to have a significant effect or not has yet to be determined.

However, while scientists are still researching these isolated chemicals from bitter orange, we still have the benefits of the whole plant in many NSP formulas. Four of NSP's respiratory formulas make use of bitter orange as a key ingredient. They are: Sinus Support EF, Seasonal Defense, Chinese Lung Support and SnoreEase. All of these formulas help to decongest the respiratory tract.

However, since bitter orange has traditionally been used as a digestive remedy, it is probably helping reduce respiratory congestion at its source, since most respiratory congestion starts with digestive and colon problems. It's also the reason bitter orange is an ingredient in both Spleen Activator and Chinese Anti-Gas formula, combinations designed to aid the digestive system.

Trigger Immune, a general immune and energy tonic, also contains bitter orange as does MetaboMax EF, a weight loss formula. The flowers of bitter orange are the source of the essential oil neroli, which is used as a relaxant for stress, depression, headaches and heart palpitations.

Selected References

The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants by Andrew Chevallier.

The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products by Tree of Light Publishing

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Complete Guide to Medicinal Herbs by Penelope Ody

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How I Learned to Breathe Freely

My Personal Healing Journey

by Steven H. Horne, RH (AHG)

When I first thought of writing this article, I thought of calling it “True Confessions of a Mouth Breather,” because it made me think of those True Confession stories that get published in magazines. Okay, so maybe it’s not any shocking self-revelation like a guest on the Jerry Springer show, but it is a topic that causes me to have to dredge up a lot of painful memories that I’ve put far behind me. Still, for all those who struggle with various respiratory ailments, I think my story holds hope. There are permanent solutions to respiratory problems that don’t involve medical band-aids that only deal with symptoms. So, with that understanding I will tell you of my personal struggle to learn to breathe freely.

Throughout my childhood and teenage years, I was chronically congested, with my mouth constantly hanging open so I could breathe. Unfortunately, it was one of the many factors that contributed to my high nerd quotient. The glasses I wore (and the fact that I actually had a pocket protector at one time) didn’t help, either.

And while it’s no shocking revelation, as a child it was emotionally painful to be so sickly. My parents were always trying to get me to close my mouth, but I really couldn’t, because if I did, I couldn’t breathe. Not only were my sinuses constantly plugged up, I had constant post-nasal drip and I “caught” colds very easily. When I would get sick, which was several times a year, it would take me two to three weeks to recover.

One of the reasons it was so painful was that my problems with breathing interfered with my ability to participate in physical sports. I couldn’t run very fast because I would start to cough and choke on the phlegm in my lungs. As a result, I came in last (behind all the girls) when we had to run in elementary school. That wasn’t just embarrassing, it was humiliating.

My mother dutifully took me to the doctor every time I got sick. Dr. Lyman Merrill Horne, a distant relative, was a good old-fashioned doctor who, knowing our family was not very well off, often accepted a loaf or two of my mother’s homemade whole wheat bread in exchange for

his services. He gave me antibiotics (penicillin) each time I got sick.

When I was 13, he diagnosed me with chronic sinusitis, and put me on daily doses of penicillin for two years. Although I didn’t get sick as often, at the end of the two years my sinuses were more plugged than ever. So, he referred my parents to a specialist: an ear, nose and throat doctor. The specialist said I had a deviated septum and that my sinus passages were too narrow. He recommended surgery to scrape the cartilage out of my nose and widen my sinus passages.

So, at age 16, I went to the hospital and had the operation. It appeared to work. For a few weeks I could actually breathe through my nose, until my sinuses started plugging up again. Now, because I was supposed to be able to breathe through my nose, I got even more criticism from my parents when my mouth was hanging open. But, the fact was, that I still couldn’t breathe properly through my nose 90% of the time.

The summer I turned 19, I was working as a camp counselor for the YMCA. I got sick early in the summer and was given another round of antibiotics. As soon as I finished it, I got sick again, only worse. This time, Dr. Horne not only gave me a stronger antibiotic, he also gave me a couple of shots of gamma globulin (to boost my immune system) and a B-Complex and C vitamin supplement which he said would help me deal with stress. He wanted me to be healthy enough to go on a mission for my church.

I felt better for about two months. I was sent on a mission for my church to smog-filled Southern California and about two weeks after I got there, my sinuses started flaring up. For the next six months, I was constantly struggling with sinus congestion, sinus headaches, sore throats (from post nasal drip) and wheezing. Then, I developed “walking pneumonia.” The doctor gave me oral antibiotics, which I took for a week while resting in bed. After a week I showed no sign of improvement, so he had me

come into his office daily for shots of tetracycline. He also gave me ampicillin orally.

When I was better, one week later, he wrote a prescription for an antihistamine. Taking the antihistamine, I was able to breathe, but it also constipated me, so that I would go without a bowel movement for a week. I decided that wasn't good, and quit taking it.

I was ready for a change.

The Start of My Healing Process

Several things happened within a couple of months. First, I decided, on my own, that I should eat healthier. I made a decision that natural, whole foods were better than processed ones and shifted my diet accordingly. At the same time, I found a health food store and saw boxes of herbal teas. Many of these plants were plants I knew the medicinal uses of because of my studies in outdoor survival as a teenager. I decided that maybe these medicines weren't just emergency backup for when there was no doctor. Maybe God made better medicines than man, and I ought to try some. So I did.

Around the same time, I also found a chiropractor who belonged to the same church as myself, and because I was on a mission, he offered to treat me for free. He encouraged me in my dietary changes and gave me additional tips, one of which was to cut out milk and dairy products, which I did.

As a result, I began to find relief for the first time in my life, although I still wasn't 100% well. It wasn't until years later that I found the secrets that would enable me to truly start breathing freely.

The first secret I discovered that really made a difference was colon cleansing. After my mission, while I was in college, someone gave me a copy of *Back to Eden* by Jethro Kloss. He suggested enemas for sinus problems, which I tried, and found they really helped. Later, I learned how to do a colon cleanse with fiber and herbs. The first cleanse I designed for myself was during my first year working for Nature's Sunshine products. I took 2 capsules of All Cell Detox three times each day and Psyllium Hulls combination twice daily in juice.

At first, I passed this dark ropy stuff, which I later learned was toxic material from the liver, released through the gallbladder and bound to the fiber I was taking. After a while this material cleared away and my stools became

a uniform light brown color and soft. At this point I started passing strings of mucus, which I believe are debris dumped from the congested lymphatic system. Once the mucus cleared away my sinuses opened up completely for the first time in my life.

The process took about three months, but it was worth it. Not only were my sinuses clear, I had more energy than I'd ever had.

However, just because my sinuses weren't plugged doesn't mean that I was breathing freely. I had to be very careful about what I ate, as animal proteins, dairy products and even some grain products could start my sinuses plugging up very quickly. A couple of years later, Jack Ritchason taught me about the hiatal hernia, pulled my stomach away from my diaphragm, closed my ileocecal valve and taught me how to work on this myself.

The effect was amazing! My digestion improved dramatically overnight and I was able to eat heavier foods without becoming congested. Now I understood that most colon problems arise from digestive problems. If food isn't digested properly, it toxifies the intestinal tract, which congests the lymphatics, which in turn, causes

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chronic respiratory congestion. I was working my way upstream towards the real source of the problem.

The most amazing thing about moving the stomach away from the diaphragm was that I could breathe more freely than I had ever been able to breathe in my entire life. For those of you who aren't familiar with this problem, the diaphragm is a large muscle that separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. The diaphragm moves downward to inflate the lungs, and moves upward to expel air from the lungs.

There is an opening in the diaphragm that the esophagus passes through. The stomach can slide up into that opening, which inhibits movement of the diaphragm. The person winds up breathing using their chest muscles instead of their diaphragm. This limits the amount of oxygen they can get into their body. It also impedes lymphatic flow. There are other spin-offs of this problem, too. Since the vagus nerve comes down through the same opening, this will stress the vagus nerve and cause chronic digestive problems. It also puts pressure on the heart, and can cause rapid heartbeat.

Jack Ritchason told me that he'd never seen a chronically ill person who didn't have this problem. So far, neither have I. In other words, in my experience, all people who are chronically ill are shallow breathers. Learning to breathe deeply is also one of the most useful therapies for chronic pain relief.

After Jack taught me how to work on my stomach, I could breathe from my diaphragm and could comfortably do a four second inhalation followed by a four second exhalation. However, there was more to come in my journey to understand how to breathe freely.

A Deeper Healing

In about 1987, a Rolfer offered to give me some sessions. I've never been a fan of deep tissue work (I like my massages to be relaxing), but I agreed to some sessions. I could see they really made a difference. The process was painful, but not unbearably so until he started to work on my abdomen.

The pain was excruciating, but I also felt like I was being choked and I couldn't breathe. However, after the session was over, my breathing was freer than it had ever been before. Prior to this, I could get my stomach to move up and down as I breathed (a sign of diaphragmatic

breathing), but my abdomen and chest were disconnected. Now, I was breathing in a new way, with my stomach and chest moving smoothly in sync with each other. After this I could also sustain a seven second inhalation and exhalation.

What we figured had happened was that my body had relieved the trauma of my birth. The umbilical cord was wrapped around my neck three times, and according to my mother, it was only Dr. Horne's skill in delivering babies that had allowed me to survive. So, from birth, my body had carried the tissue trauma that said: "It's difficult to breathe."

I recently learned about the Bowen technique, a very gentle, but powerful body work technique from Australia. Alexia, who is one of the two certifying instructors in the U.S. for this technique, told me that when a baby is colicky, it's because they were twisted during the birthing process, which caused the diaphragm to move out of place and the vagus nerve to become slightly twisted. Since the vagus nerve controls digestion, constipation, hiccups, intestinal gas and colic are the result. Bowen practitioners have a simple procedure that activates the diaphragm and straightens out the vagus nerve. This usually stops the colic completely and permanently within 24 hours.

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Since I was a colicky baby, it is obvious to me that the stress of my birth torqued my vagus nerve and interfered with the function of my digestive system. This led to poor metabolism of proteins, which in turn led to chronic respiratory congestion. Working on the hiatal hernia problem started the healing process, but it wasn't until my rolfing session that things were properly put back into place.

The story doesn't end even there. Last spring, when I started working with Deanna Hansen on the Love Your Body Beautiful program, she taught me even more about the importance of the breath. From her, I learned that the diaphragm is the only muscle in the body which is under both conscious and unconscious control. So, with breathing, we have a choice. We can either breathe unconsciously or we can breathe consciously.

I already knew that every emotion has its own breathing pattern, and when we don't want to feel our emotions, we hold our breath. Learning to consciously breathe during times of emotional trauma helps us stay centered and helps us work through the trauma in a healthy manner. So, breathing is absolutely essential not only to our physical health, but also to our emotional health.

There is one more thing I learned from Deanna, and that is the importance of the exhalation. She taught me that it was important to exhale as fully as possible because this helps us release things. Before, I had always focused my breathing exercises on inhaling deeply. Now, I practiced not only inhaling deeply, but exhaling fully. As a result, I can now do a 10 second inhalation and a 10 second exhalation.

Breathing is vitally important to our health, but we don't think about it very much. To me, however, learning to breathe freely has been a major part of my journey of healing, not just physically, but emotionally. There is a reason why we equate breathing with freedom and being overly controlled and regulated without being smothered.

My breathing problems as a child were compounded by a smothering mother, who didn't allow us room to breathe. I know my mom meant well, and I don't hold it against her, but I know that my sickliness as a child had as much to do with the constant emotional pressure I felt as a child as it did with diet or any other factor. In fact, emotional problems are always breathing problems, because we typically hold our breath in order to stifle our feelings.

Parting Thoughts About Breathing

I spend a lot of time teaching clients how to breathe, because I find it so important to their recovery. Here are some of the reasons why.

1. Deep breathing pumps the lymphatics, which draw fluid and toxins away from every cell in your body. This reduces inflammation and the pain that accompanies it.

2. Pain is usually a sign that there is a lack of oxygen to the tissues. I've led people in deep breathing exercises where they commented on how various pains just "went away" while they were doing the exercise.

3. Breathing is an integral part of emotional healing work. As long as a person keeps breathing; they will stay in touch with their feelings. Holding one's breath stifles emotion and dulls one's sense of joy and happiness as well as pain.

4. If you're over acid, breathing is the fastest way to alkalize the body. In fact, breathing is the first and most important pH buffering system in the body.

5. Breathing helps you stay centered and relaxed and reduces your stress level. Anytime you find yourself feeling anxious you are probably breathing shallowly. Depressed people breathe infrequently. Deep breathing calms anxiety and lifts depression. In fact, it helps you cope better with any stressful situation.

6. The Chinese say that excessive grief damages the lungs. Every time I've encountered people who had chronic lung problems that weren't responding to herbal remedies, dealing with suppressed grief cleared the lungs. Post-nasal drip is a form of internalized crying or sadness. Older people often die of pneumonia after losing a spouse or experiencing another event that triggers deep grief. Grieving involves allowing oneself to exhale fully, i.e., to let go.

7. The hiatal hernia is a sign of suppressed anger and frustration. The person can't "stomach" these intense emotions and hold them back by sucking in their breath. This is what draws the stomach up into the diaphragm. Finding a safe place to connect with the angry, frustrated feelings and "throwing a temper tantrum" will always relax the stomach and help bring down a hiatal hernia.

I'm so happy that I can finally breathe freely. By applying some of the concepts in this article, you can too.



Kimberly Balas' Clinician's Corner

Pulmonary Fibrosis

A client has been diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis and was told there is no help for this condition. They are seeking another route. Do you have any experience with this problem?

Geraldine

I just happened to have had two cases of this and also just finished doing extensive respiratory research on it, so I have a lot of information on this problem. If you look at pulmonary fibrosis symptomatically there is nothing that will help because nothing is going to tone down the symptoms unless you address the cause. Unfortunately, the medical profession doesn't seem to want to deal with causes, because there are no prescriptions involved. So when they tell you that death is inevitable in 5 years, it means there is no drug for it that they have right now.

This is a very serious disease, and there are no miracle cures or quick fixes. It will require some serious effort on the part of the client, but if you follow a strict program of changing diet and lifestyle habits, you can halt the progression of the illness, and in many cases reverse it. It isn't a death sentence, and at the very least inflammation can be reduced, and breathing and lung function can be improved. But, it will require a total lifestyle change and supplements taken for the rest of the person's life.

Pulmonary fibrosis is caused primarily by overexposure to environmental toxins and molds. It develops most readily in people who work around harsh chemicals, such as auto shop workers, carpet cleaners, pool cleaners, etc. It can also be due to high levels of airborne pathogens that infiltrate the lungs. For example, living in moldy houses may be the major culprit in many cases of pulmonary fibrosis. Black mold is a primary suspect in causing this disease. Bacteria, viruses and mycoplasma can all infect the lungs as well, and these infections may lead to pulmonary fibrosis.

The respiratory system is our first line of immune defense, as well as the first layer of the pH buffering system needed to help maintain cellular health. The tissue is effected by the toxins and the cellular environment becomes stagnant or clogged, so toxins can't be eliminated properly. This sends the cells into an anaerobic state.

Whatever the original source of the irritation to the lungs, after years of exposure coupled with poor nutrition and other lifestyle factors, the immune system can't deal with the problem anymore and starts to break down. So, the first step in natural therapy would be to limit exposure to irritants to the lungs. It is not always easy to identify the irritants. They could be mold or bacteria in a house or workplace, toxins, etc. Try and change living and working conditions so the person is breathing air that is as pure as possible. If necessary, get a high quality filtering system to take particles out of the air.

The next step is to modulate how the immune system is attacking the lungs. In this sense, pulmonary fibrosis is much like any other autoimmune disorder. You help the immune system identify the cells being attacked as part of the body so the immune system will stop attacking them. Colostrum will help here. Colostrum can also help with combating underlying infections.

Other factors are going to contribute to the underlying problems. Correcting these is where big lifestyle changes will be necessary. The consumption of aspartame (in diet drinks, Equal, NutraSweet) causes many health problems, as it can lead to the production of formaldehyde and other toxins in the body. So get rid of the diet sodas and pretty much most of the chewing gum on the market. The sugar really isn't any better here either. Studies show that a teaspoon of white sugar disrupts your immune system for two hours.

Move towards eating as many whole foods and organic products as possible. Increase intake of the Omega 3 essential fatty acid. Essential fatty acids (EFAs) are important for pul-

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monary fibrosis because cells cannot properly oxygenate and function if they are lacking EFAs. Use olive oil and flax seed oil for salads, and palm or coconut oil for cooking. Coconut oil, or fat from any coconut product, can help optimize Omega 3s, fight viral infections, increase energy levels and even help with weight loss. More importantly, the medium chain fatty acids that comprise about 50% of coconut oil have been known to be anti-inflammatory.

One of the few treatments the medical doctors recommend for pulmonary fibrosis is interferon treatments. The treatment is very expensive (and fairly toxic with unpleasant side effects). You can help increase interferon naturally by using Organic Germanium. You can also get some protection using Milk Thistle Combo.

A good probiotic is essential to help increase the alpha interferon levels. It will get your intestines in better shape and kill pathogens throughout your body. This gives a secondary level support.

Since it is inflammation that essentially causes the fibrosis of your lungs, the sooner you can reduce the inflammation, the better. This is where the Thai Go and Green Tea help. You could also add some Hawthorne berry. APS II or IF Relief are also options.

When you have pulmonary fibrosis, you will be overly acidic. Acidosis leads to many degenerative conditions in your body, and is one of the principal causes of degenerative disease development. By reducing acidity using pH Green Zone, you will also be reducing inflammation. As pH improves, the body will be better able to detoxify not only the lungs, but every other cell in your body.

Silica helps to repair lung tissue, so I would look at using larger quantities of HSN-W. Silica is a nutrient that helps any soft tissue heal, including the lungs. Lung tissue function and elasticity are silica dependent. Silica promotes mucous flow, reduces coughing and supports the regeneration of mucous membranes. Silica stimulates cell metabolism and is also an anti-inflammatory. I would also consider using Bone/Skin Poultice to support lung regeneration.

Reduce the scar tissue build up with MSM and Protease Plus. MSM is good for membrane flexibility, alkalinity and is an anti-inflammatory too. You have to increase the amount taken here to about 10-12 per day. The Protease will go into the blood stream when taken on an empty stomach and help clean up scar tissue. Many studies show that enzymes help relieve inflammation, dissolve fibrin and fats clogging arteries and improve circulation. This will help deliver more oxygen to the cells in the body.

I would look at some whole leaf aloe for the long chain sugars it contains. *Acta Anatomica*, a European journal, states that long chain carbohydrate molecules have a coding capacity surpassing that of amino acids. In March 2001, *Science Magazine* dedicated virtually the entire magazine to the essential saccharides that make up these cellular communication keys. The University of California, San Diego, announced the establishment of a Center for the further research and development of the Science of Glycobiology and the President of the Royal Academy of Medicine in London, Dr. John Asford, said that "Sugars are going to be the molecules of the next decade."

Also, since you want to achieve anti-inflammatory action and movement of sugars, then you would consider using Adrenal Support.

Quite clearly, toxins in the lung are a major issue in pulmonary fibrosis. Thus, the more toxins you can eliminate from the lungs, the better. The single best detoxifier and pathogen killer for lung cells, and every other cell in your body, is glutathione. You will activate glutathione with the N-Acetyl-Cysteine. There is some in the Milk Thistle combo but I would suggest more. You need the polyphenols from Green Tea to help activate glutathione, too. Enviro-Detox would help with the cleansing part of this. I would start with one per day and work up to six per day on this.

Pulmonary fibrosis took years to develop. It will not improve fast, but there are ways to help.

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The *Nature's Field* E-zine and website are published by Tree of Light Publishing, a division of Kether-One, Inc.

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