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Sheryl Sanchez, L.Ac.

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Spring Newsletter, 2013

Spring: A Time of Renewal

Spring in Paradise!! The wildflowers and grasses, bushes and birds and bees are all flourishing amongst the rains of Spring here in our Sierra Foothill town of Paradise. If you live elsewhere, Spring may not have arrived as apparent as here, but in any case, we are all connected to the change of season and feel the new energy of Spring when it does arrive.

The ancient Chinese recognized the seasons of nature affect us, and incorporated this knowledge into Chinese Medicine. Spring is the time of renewal and a 'time of planting seeds, both physically and mentally'. The energy of the plants and trees are lifting up and out. We enjoy the longer days of light and our energy is renewed as well. This is the best time to support and cleanse the Liver, and rejuvenate ourselves.

Enjoy your wonderful, renewed Spring!

Sheryl Sanchez, L.Ac.

Spring Renewal, Liver Cleansing

To understand how to balance ourselves, and specifically our internal and energetic organs to create health as recognized in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), eating a diet that corresponds to the season is important.

Accordingly, Spring is the season that corresponds to the *Liver* organ or energy. And the flavor of food that corresponds to Spring or the *Liver* is *sour*. The *sour* flavor is generally known in Chinese Food Therapy to help break down fats and proteins, to help dissolve minerals for absorption, to stimulate contraction or astringency, and to help organize scattered mental patterns. The *sour* flavor is not found with any frequency in the modern American diet today, unfortunately. Some people may eat dill pickles, sauerkraut, a tart green apple, or even rarely now

Current Events

[Chinese Medicine and Food Therapy:](#)

[Spring - Time to Tame the Liver](#)

Thursday

April 11, 2013

6:30 to 8:30 pm

[Spring Retreat into Ancient Healing Arts](#)

Sunday

April 21, 2013

12 noon to 5 pm

Paradise Ridge Senior Center
(Early bird discount extended until April 12, 2013)

Esoteric Facts about Chinese Herbal Medicine or You Don't Know what Modern Research will Show!

[Diabetes, Inflammation and Chinese Herbs Research: Inhibition of inflammation might be useful to prevent the development of diabetes](#)

Interesting Facts about Chinese Culture

[Sauerkraut is believed to have been brought to Europe from China](#)

Quick Links

[Heavenly Herbs and Acup](#)

grapefruit, but that usually encompasses the sour flavors in most of our diets.

Sour Citrus: Lemon or Lime or Orange

Most of us now think that lemonade should be sweet, whereas it really used to be known as a *sour*, somewhat puckering, refreshing drink, which is actually better for us. If we eat other citrus like oranges that are a bit on the tart side, no one wants to eat them! (Contemplate this: why are 'cuties' so much more popular now - besides mass marketing! - I think it is because mandarin oranges are sweeter than the larger oranges, not because they are 'cute' or easier to peel!)

So, this is the time of year to incorporate more *sour* foods. One simple idea is to add lemon juice to water when you drink it (squeeze a half lemon). This is a great way to stimulate the Gallbladder (the paired organ with the Liver in TCM) when drank on an empty stomach first thing in the morning. This helps to get the digestive juices flowing. Lime juice or apple cider vinegar could also be used. (Some will be concerned about lemon juice wearing down the enamel on your teeth - you are not consuming enough of it to really matter in this regard - unless you already have enamel erosion, or have health conditions which can lead to it such as heartburn, frequent vomiting such as in bulimia, xerostomia (dry mouth caused by medications or other conditions), etc.) And remember that those *sour* oranges are good for you too, especially in Spring.

Fermentation

Some of you following current dietary or nutrition trends will have noticed the 'fermentation craze' of the past few years, which is hopefully most of you! Eating fermented foods, many of which are *sour* from being 'pickled', is consistent with the *sour* flavor helping digestion. Fermented foods are known to aid in digestion because they are full of both enzymes and probiotics, and from the TCM perspective, are therefore easier to digest since they are 'pre-digested'. Fermenting your own foods may not be for all of us, but more are becoming available in supermarkets. But for those of you inclined to ferment your own food, the current cultural classic is [The Art of Fermentation](#), by Sandor Ellix Katz. (I have to admit that my one attempt at fermenting didn't exactly turn out nor have I taken the time to attempt it again, but I also need to purchase this book!) Another simple way to add the sour energy of fermentation to your diet is to incorporate vinegars to your cooking and salads (apple cider, balsamic, red wine, rice, etc.)

Yogurt

Yogurt (or kefir) is a fermented *sour* food as well. If one can tolerate milk and if it is appropriate for your constitution or current diagnosis, yogurt is actually very nourishing and medicinal. Keep in mind that yogurt can also be made from substitute 'milks' too (like coconut, almond and soy). Yogurt is also very easy to make fresh. The ideal is to make it yourself from raw milk, but most will have to use organic milk instead. (Easy crockpot recipe that I use can be found at [Yogurt in Crockpot recipe](#).) However, plain organic yogurt is readily available at most supermarkets - yes, always get just plain yogurt - remember, the *sour* taste is what you need and you can add your own sweetness to balance the *sour* if desired (no dyes or high-fructose corn syrup like store-bought). Keep in mind that it

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Dragon Herbs Goji Berries

is now known that whole milk is digested better than lower fat versions (references available, on request). Yogurt can be highly versatile as well. Add anything to yogurt that you like - fruit, fresh or dried (including fruits like coconut, mango or figs), raw nuts, hemp or chia seeds, even organic grains such as gluten-free oats. Since yogurt has a cooling nature also, it will offset the spiciness of Mexican or Indian food quite nicely too.

Here's one simple great sour and sweet combo: Mix some lime juice, lime zest and honey to yogurt. Cut up some fruit such as apples or melon, add some berries and/or grapes, or other fruit you like and you have a nice refreshing and cooling dessert (best for a warm Spring day since this combination is very cold energetically). *Sour* and sweet such as this can be a great balancer for the digestion.

Goji Berries

Goji berries, or Lycium fruit, (known in TCM as Gou Qi Zi) is one slightly *sour* fruit that has become popular in the last few years. It has been in the Chinese Materia Medica since 500 AD. (We also use the bark of this plant in TCM as well.) This medicinal herb is used to benefit the eyes and vision, especially due to certain imbalances relating to the *Liver* (or *Kidney*) from a TCM perspective. It is also a 'Blood Tonic', which means it will strengthen the *Blood* and can help many health conditions as diverse as weak lower back and knees, premature gray hair, diabetes, night sweats, and chronic dry cough. Research has now shown that this fruit has a very high ORAC value, an antioxidant measurement and that it is also hepatoprotective (a liver protector). Additionally, this fruit is high in immune-stimulating polysaccharides plus has the nutrients beta-carotene and zeaxanthin, both known to support vision health.

Dandelion and Young Spring Greens

Dandelion is a very powerful medicinal plant; you could really call it a "super-weed"! Dandelion leaves are used in TCM to strengthen the *Liver* and treat many *Liver* imbalances, including certain types of bacterial or viral infections, abscesses and nodules, including cancer. Dandelion greens or leaves are used in other herbal traditions as well, including the root and flowers both (i.e., all are medicinal and edible). Fresh dandelion greens can now be found at local supermarkets and can be easily incorporated into your diet in salads, soups and smoothies. (It does have a bitter taste, so the easiest way to get used to the flavor is to add it dishes you already eat!) In general, young spring greens such as dandelion, kale, chards, bok choy, arugula and watercress all have a natural bitterness that works to stimulate the *Liver* as well.

Eating too much *sour* food can lead to disharmony in the *Liver* too, just as too much *sweet* food will affect the digestion or pancreas. Balance is always the key to each and every bit of dietary or health advice, or as in this quote I really like by the famous chef Julia Child: "Everything in moderation, including moderation"!

To learn more about how the seasons of nature affect our health and how incorporating certain foods into your diet this Spring can renew the *Liver*, consider coming to my Chinese Medicine and Food Therapy presentation on April 11, 2013, at 6:30 pm at my office. Recipes will also be discussed. For details, see the flier at

**12 oz
(Very fresh tasting!
Samples available
at the office.)**

GoJi Berries information



**Allergena
Zone 9: Allergy
Relief Drops
(Desensitization
of tree, weed
and grass
pollens)**

Homeopathic Allergy Relief Drops information



**Bi Yan Pian:
Chinese
herbal
'anti-
histamine'**

Bi Yan Pian information



**Sinusin
Nasal
Spray:
For
Rhinitis,
Sinusitis
or
Sinus
Infections
Sinusin
Nasal Spray
information**

[Spring - Time to Tame the Liver.](#)

Currently Reading...

Real Food, All Year

by Nishanga Bliss, MSTCM, LAc

This book came out last year and is an excellent book to learn about Chinese medicinal dietary therapy through a current, modern perspective. The author does a great job of explaining the TCM approach of how we need different foods in different seasons, and how to use this knowledge to balance or heal yourself. It is promoted as a 'season-by-season guide to healthy eating' and you will definitely learn 'how each season affects your body's health!' The author also covers such current topics as why we need fermented foods and why we need to avoid GMO foods. The recipes cover such highly nutritious foods such as Bone and Vegetable Broths, seaweeds and greens, and sprouting. The only shortcoming of this book is that there aren't that many simple and easy recipes using foods that most of us consume regularly. However, there is a simple sauerkraut recipe!

True Food: Seasonal, Sustainable, Simple, Pure

by Andrew Weil, MD, et al

Now here is a great cookbook full of plenty of simple, interesting, different, scrumptious and healthy recipes! The book comes from recipes used at the *True Food Kitchen* restaurant, now with several locations across the west. There is brief dietary health advice as well, which is to be expected from this well-known doctor. It briefly covers what an anti-inflammatory diet, why kale and garlic is so good for us, and even has a few recipes with Chinese herbs! It also touches on vegan and gluten-free diet options. I think the best part overall is that the recipes have ethnic flavors - Mexican, Greek, Asian (Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Thai), Italian and more are covered here. Examples of recipes are Moroccan Chicken Salad, Bison Chili, Braised Broccoli with Orange and Parmesan, and Pistachio Cream (a dessert). I definitely plan on making some of these recipes and see them becoming staples in my diet!

References:

[1] Tierra, Lesley. Healing with the Herbs of Life. Berkeley: Crossing Press, p. 345.

**Sinusin
Nasal Spray
information**