



**Identification of  
Tiny Seed and Fruit  
Types of Chinese  
Materia Medica**

# Identification Key

Chinese Materia Medica (CMM) are categorised by their main colours, shapes and surface features for readers to find the corresponding monographs quickly.

## Black Hue

### Round, spherical or reniform

With small and dense granular protuberances on the surface... [Semen Vaccariae](#)

With sub-polygonal striations on the surface..... [Semen Celosiae](#)

Usually with remained membranous perianth at the base..... [Fructus Polygoni Orientalis](#)

### Elliptical or oblong

With fine wrinkles on the surface..... [Semen Plantaginis](#)

### Semicircular or ovate

With wrinkles and small and dense rectangular or polygonal  
striations on the surface..... [Semen Allii Tuberosi](#)

## Green Hue

### Reniform

With smooth surface..... [Semen Astragali Complanati](#)

## Reddish-brown Hue

### Elliptical, ovoid, oblong, ovate or polygonal

With brown dots on the surface..... [Semen Lini](#)

With reticulate striations on the surface

Both sides usually have 2 shallow longitudinal grooves  
each, one of which is usually deeper..... [Descurainiae Semen](#)

With several longitudinal grooves on one side..... [Raphani Semen](#)

### Cordate

With translucent membranous trichomes on the surface..... [Semen Hygrophilae Salicifoliae](#)

### Round

With granular protuberances on the surface..... [Fructus Broussonetiae](#)

## Yellow or Yellowish-brown Hue

### Spherical, elliptical, ovoid, oblong or ovate

With longitudinal ridges on the surface

With sinuous primary ridges and straight secondary ridges  
on the surface..... [Fructus Coriandri](#)

Mericaip has 5 longitudinal ridges on the dorsal side

Odour slight, with characteristic aroma after broken by  
rubbing..... [Fructus Cnidii](#)

With characteristic aroma..... [Foeniculi Fructus](#)

With reticulate protuberances on the surface..... [Semen Sinapis](#)

Mericaip is densely covered with conical spines on the dorsal side..... [Fructus Torilis](#)

With membranous endotesta remained at the upper part, apex is  
deep brown..... [Semen Platycladi](#)

### Quadrilateral

With 1 deep groove on both sides..... [Semen Trigonellae](#)

### Five-pointed stellate

With brown or deep brown maculae and white warty protuberances  
on the surface..... [Fructus Kochiae](#)

### Citrus segment-shaped

Mericaip with distinct protruding radial stripes started from the  
slightly dented area on both sides..... [Fructus Malvae](#)

## Brown Hue

**Elliptical, ovoid, oblong, ovate or spherical**

With reticulate striations on the surface..... [Perillae Fructus](#)

With irregularly distributed granular substances and extremely small reticulate striations on the surface..... [Cuscutae Semen](#)

With small and dense warty protuberances and sparse white or light yellowish-brown maculae on the surface..... [Semen Impatiensis](#)

Usually with deep brown or blackish-brown irregular mottles on the surface..... [Fructus Aetii](#)

With 5-pointed stellate fissure at the apex..... [Fructus Evodiae](#)

Merica has 4 narrow wings on the dorsal side, with 1 column of flat spines on each wing..... [Fructus Carotae](#)

## Deep Brown Hue

### Reniform

Surface shriveled and uneven..... [Fructus Ligustri Lucidi](#)

With reticulate striations and short pubescence on the surface.... [Semen Abutili](#)

### Quadrilateral

With 1 linear dent or broad band on both sides..... [Semen Cassiae](#)

### Triangular pyramidal

With protruding maculae on the surface, irregularly shaped..... [Fructus Leonuri](#)

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