



Identification of Tiny Seed and Fruit Types of Chinese Materia Medica

Semen Vaccariae*



1 cm

Source

The dried ripe seed of *Vaccaria segetalis* (Neck.) Garcke in the family Caryophyllaceae

Property and flavour

Neutral; bitter

Meridian affinity

Liver and stomach meridians

Actions

To circulate blood and unblock meridians; to increase lactation and resolve swelling; to promote urination and relieve strangury

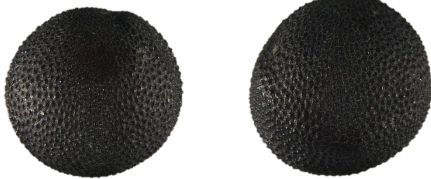
Note:

* Its name in Chinese Pharmacopoeia (2020 Edition) is “Vaccariae Semen”.

Micro-morphological features

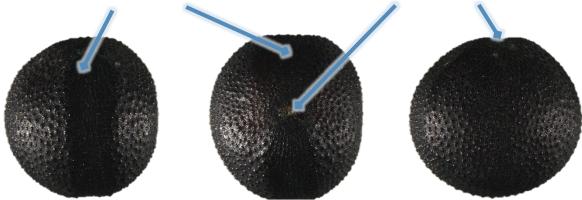
Shape

Spherical or sub-spherical



With longitudinal groove on one side

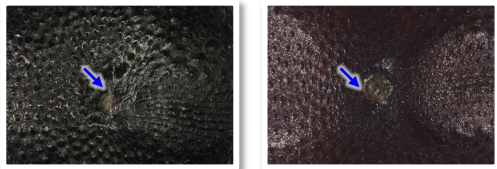
With dot-like hilum at one end, sunken



0.5 mm

Surface

Black, occasionally with reddish-brown; slightly lustrous, with small and dense granular protuberances, hilum is lighter in colour (→)

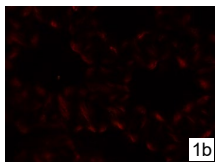
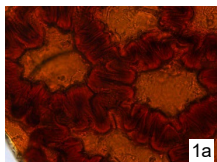


0.2 mm

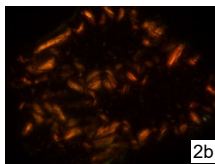
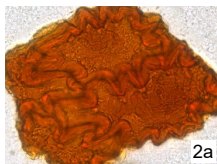
Powder microscopic features

Testa

Epidermal cell of testa



Reddish-brown or yellowish-brown, appears sub-polygonal in surface view, with distinct lumen, anticlinal wall has deeply sinuous (1) or stellate (2) thickening, some have striations; reddish-brown or yellowish-brown under polarized light microscope



Inner epidermal cell of testa



Light yellowish-brown, appears sub-rectangular, sub-square or polygonal in surface view, anticlinal wall is tightly beaded, with reticulate striations

Key identification features

Micro-morphology

- ⊙ Spherical or sub-spherical
- ⊙ With longitudinal groove on one side
- ⊙ Surface is slightly lustrous, with small and dense granular protuberances

Powder microscopy

- ⊙ Epidermal cell of testa: anticlinal wall has deeply sinuous or stellate thickening
- ⊙ Inner epidermal cell of testa: anticlinal wall is tightly beaded

For more information, please refer to [website of the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards](#):

Semen Vaccariae – HKCMMS (Vol 3)

Government Chinese Medicines Testing Institute

Department of Health

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