

Macroscopic and Microscopic Identification of Cortex type of Decoction Pieces Commonly Found in Hong Kong



Cortex Dictamni*

Source The dried root bark of *Dictamnus dasycarpus* Turcz. in the family Rutaceae

Property and Flavour Cold; bitter

Meridian Affinity Spleen, stomach and bladder meridians

Actions To clear heat and dry dampness, remove wind and remove toxins

Production Area Mainly produced in Hebei, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Inner Mongolia, Shandong, etc.

Note:

* Its name in Chinese Pharmacopoeia (2025 Edition) is “Dictamni Cortex”.



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Department of Health

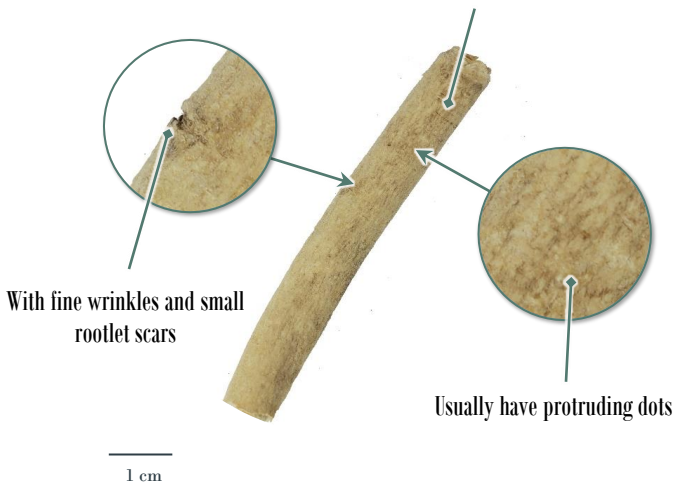


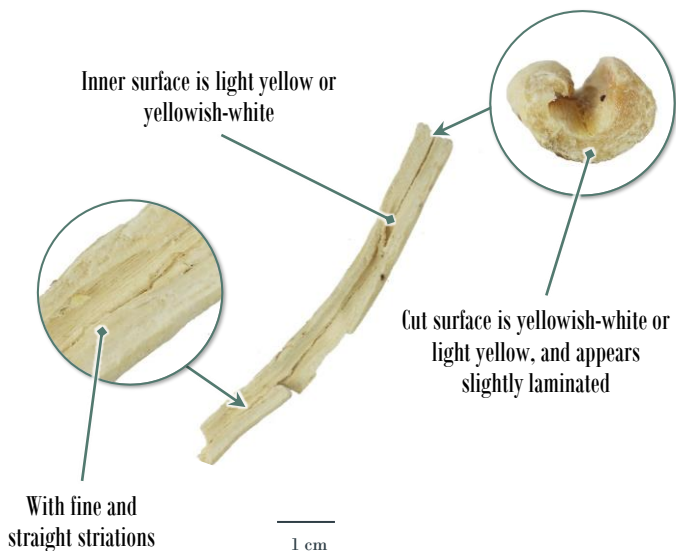
Macroscopic Identification Features

Cortex Dictamni (Sections)

Shape Quilled or semi-quilled, varies in length

Cork on the outer surface is greyish-white, yellowish-white or light greyish-yellow. No lenticels





Texture Fragile, easily broken, dust wafts when broken

Fracture Uneven, appears slightly laminated



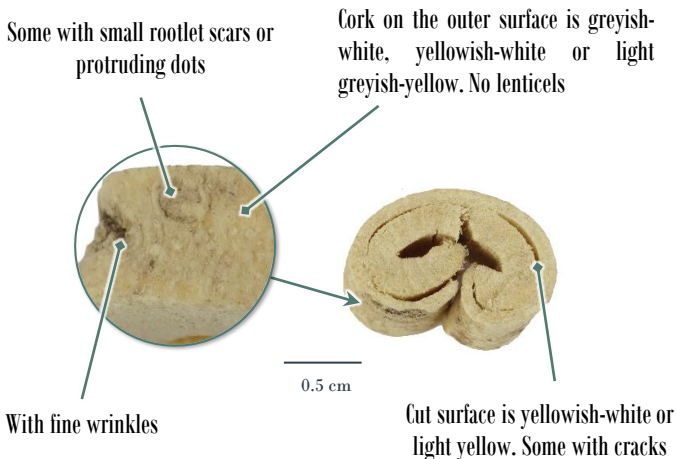
0.5 cm

Odour Muttony



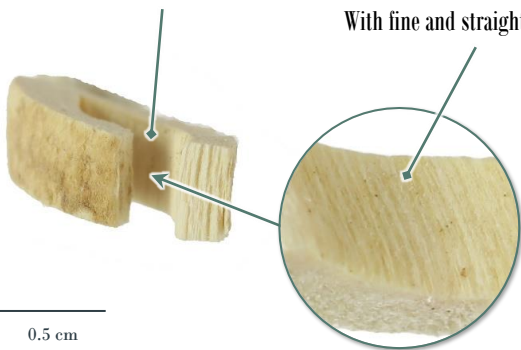
Cortex Dictamni (Slices)

Shape Round, sub-rounded or quilled thick slices, hollow, some are broken



Inner surface is light yellow or yellowish-white

With fine and straight striations



0.5 cm



Texture Fragile, easily broken, dust wafts when broken

Fracture Uneven, appears slightly laminated



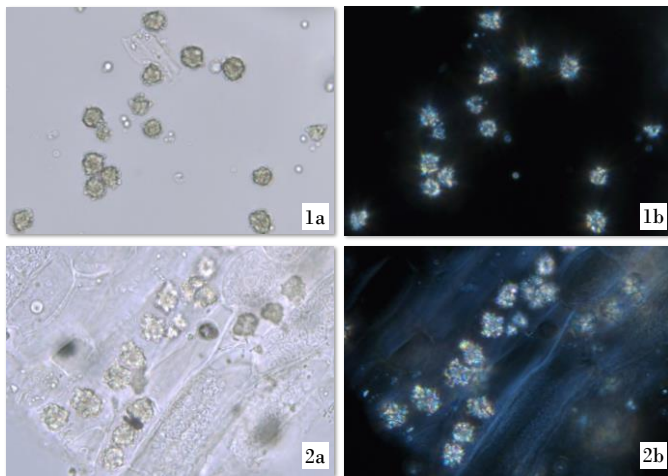
0.5 cm

Odour Muttony



Feature of Simplified Powder Microscopic Identification - Crystal -

Cluster of calcium oxalate



50 µm

Frequently found, varies in size, scattered (1), or present in parenchymatous cell (2) and inlaid within fibre wall in groups; polychromatic under polarized light microscope

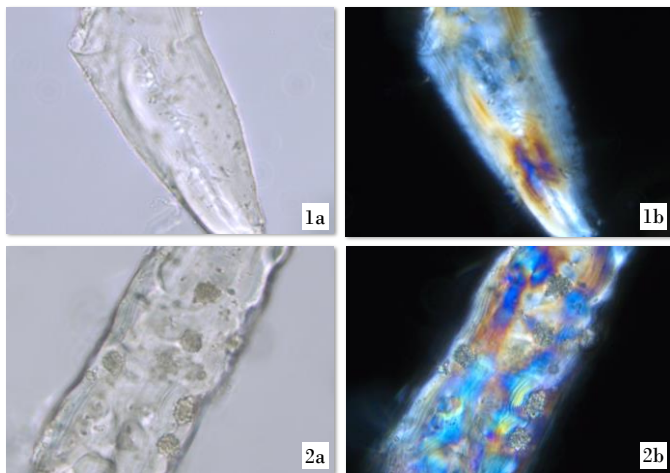
a. features under bright field; b. features under polarized light



Additional Features of Powder Microscopic Identification

- Sclerenchyma -

Fibre



50 μ m

Frequently found, mostly singly scattered, mostly broken (1), intact ones appear fusiform, extremely long, wall is extremely thick, striations are fine, dense and distinct, some walls are inlaid with cluster of calcium oxalate (2); polychromatic under polarized light microscope

a. features under bright field; b. features under polarized light



- Protective tissue -

Cork cell



50 μ m

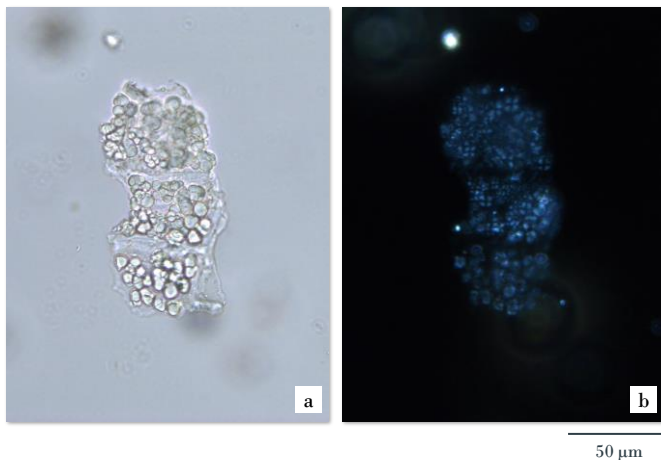
Barely found, colourless or light yellowish-brown, appears sub-square or polygonal in surface view

a. features under bright field; b. features under polarized light



- Starch -

Starch granule



Mostly are simple granules, appears sub-rounded, hilum and striations mostly indistinct, compound granule consists of 2 to several units is barely found; black and cruciate-shaped under the polarized light microscope

a. features under bright field; b. features under polarized light





Key Identification Features

- Macroscopic features -

- ◇ Cork on the outer surface is greyish-white, yellowish-white or light greyish-yellow and has fine wrinkles
- ◇ Fracture is uneven and appears slightly laminated

- Powder microscopic feature -

- ◇ Cluster of calcium oxalate is frequently found, and scattered or present in parenchymatous cell and inlaid within fibre wall in groups

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

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Government Chinese Medicines Testing Institute

Department of Health

Enquiry hotline: 2509 5809

Website: www.cmro.gov.hk

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