

# Akebia quinata

*Akebia quinata* (**chocolate vine** or **five-leaf akebia**) is a shrub that is native to **Japan**, **China** and **Korea**, and naturalized in the eastern United States from **Georgia** to **Michigan** to **Massachusetts**.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>

## 1 Outline

It grows to 10 m (30 ft) or more in height and has compound leaves with five leaflets. The flowers are clustered in racemes and are chocolate-scented, with three or four sepals. The fruits are sausage-shaped pods which contain edible pulp.<sup>[1][4]</sup> The gelatinous placentation is littered with seeds but have a sweet flavor, so they used to be enjoyed by children playing out in the countryside in the olden days in Japan. The rind, with a slight bitter taste, is used as vegetable, e.g., stuffed with ground meat and deep-fried. The vines are traditionally used for basket-weaving.<sup>[5]</sup>

In China, *A. quinata* is referred to as 木通 – *mù tōng* (Pinyin) or *mu tung* (Wade-Giles) – meaning “woody thoroughgoing (plant)”. It is also occasionally known as 通草 – *tōng cǎo* (Pinyin) or *tung tsao* (Wade-Giles) – meaning “thoroughgoing grass”. In the Chinese pharmacopoeia it is believed to be therapeutic as a diuretic, antiphlogistic, galactagogue and analgesic. The principal use of the herb in China is as a traditional remedy for insufficient lactation in nursing mothers. The medicinal part of the plant is the woody stem which is sliced in transverse sections and prepared as a decoction. The stem contains approximately 30% potassium salts thus giving the diuretic action.<sup>[6]</sup>

*A. quinata* is listed in the National Pest Plant Accord list which identifies pest plants that are prohibited from sale, commercial propagation and distribution across New Zealand.

## 2 Gallery

- Female flower and 5 male flowers in Mount Ibuki
- Fruit
- Sketch

## 3 See also

- Kampo herb list

## 4 References

- [1] Levy-Yamamori, Ran; Ran Levy; Gerard Taaffe (2004). *Garden Plants of Japan*. Timber Press. ISBN 0-88192-650-7. Retrieved 2009-04-05.
- [2] "*Akebia quinata*". *Flora of China*. Retrieved 2009-04-05.
- [3] Flora of North America vol 3
- [4] Decaisne, Joseph. Archives du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle 1: 195, pl. 13a. 1839.
- [5] taken from ja:木通 (2011.11.3(Thu) 12:08)
- [6] Reid, Daniel (2001), “A Handbook of Chinese Healing Herbs”, Tuttle Publishing, ISBN 962-593-988-1. Retrieved on 2009-05-20.

## 5 External links

- *Akebia quinata* (Houtt.) Dcne. (ITIS)
- *Akebia quinata* (Houtt.) Decne. Medicinal Plant Images Database (School of Chinese Medicine, Hong Kong Baptist University) (traditional Chinese) (English)

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