



## FUMITORY

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**FUMITORY** (*šāhtara*), term used for two species of plants of the genus *Fumaria* in Persia, *Fumaria officinalis* and *Fumaria parviflora*. *Fumaria parviflora* is distributed from Europe and North Africa through the Near and Middle East to Central Asia. The annual, wild herb is very often found in Persia and Afghanistan. The plant is bitter and slightly acrid.

Aqua fumitory, i.e., 'araq-e šāhtara, is obtained from the whole plant by water distillation. About 1 kg of fumitory soaked in 12 liters of water overnight is distilled to yield about 7 liters of aqua of fumitory. It is mainly used for flavoring sherbets.

Fumitory was highly prized in traditional medicine; it was known as *šāhtaraj* in Arabic and identified with the *qofnoš* (Gk. *kápnos*) of Dioscorides. Following Galen, it was regarded as an astringent and used as a diuretic, stomach tonic, and epiphoric (Bīrūnī, pp. 386, tr. 345).



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