

Herb of the Month: Chrysanthemum



Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*) is in the daisy (Compositae) family along with many ornamentals as well as the herb feverfew. Native to China and Japan, this nutritious flower loves to grow in full sun in well-drained soil. It grows to a height of 12-36 inches and flowers in the fall with an array of red, orange, yellow, white and lavender colors. In Greek the word "Chrysanthemum" is derived from chyros, meaning "golden", and anthos, meaning "flower". The white and yellow flowers are used medicinally and are what you will find in most herb stores. Ju Hua, as it is called in China, is known to purify the blood, and in Chinese medicine is used as a cooling summer beverage. (Look for a recipe at the end of this article.) This marvelous flower has many beneficial properties such as anti-inflammatory, antipyretic (heat-reducing), antihypertensive (reducing high blood pressure), as well as being soothing to the liver. This herb is excellent for fevers with headache and for counteracting the effects of hot climate. The white chrysanthemum flower has been used to relieve hypertension, vertigo, pacify the liver, expel wind, help improve vision and are used for a wide range of eye problems such as eye soreness, conjunctivitis, redness, night blindness, and eye strain.

The yellow chrysanthemum flower is more effective for cold and flu symptoms of fever and sore throat. Research is demonstrating Chrysanthemum's potential in treating angina, a heart condition, by dilating coronary arteries. Research is also proving this flower to be antibiotic against a wide range of pathogens. Chrysanthemum possesses strong activity against abnormal growths. Tests have shown that out of fifteen compounds isolated from this edible flower, all showed potent inhibitory effects against abnormal cells.



Chrysanthemum flowers are often combined with other herbs to treat childhood convulsions as well.

The primary chemical constituents of Chrysanthemum include stachydrine, flavonoids, betaine, choline, and vitamin B1. The juice of a fresh plant can be applied to skin infections. The flavor of this flower is sweet with a slightly bitter taste. It is considered relatively safe for long-term use. The tea of Chrysanthemum is as popular in China as chamomile is here. As a matter of fact, they both have somewhat similar uses for relieving indigestion and calming the nervous system, except that Chrysanthemum flowers have more lubrication, nourishing the vital fluids of the body.

Chrysanthemum Flower Tea

1 tablespoon Chrysanthemum flowers, 1-2 slices licorice root
Heat 2 cups of water, pour over flowers and licorice, and let steep for 10-15 minutes.
Strain and enjoy hot or put in your fridge for later.
You can substitute peppermint (2 teaspoons) for the licorice.