

Did You Know?



Chamomile, *Matricaria chamomilla*

- The eight-The German chamomile, *Matricaria chamomilla*, also known as *M. recutita* is native to southern and eastern Europe and western Asia, though it now grows widely through temperate disturbed areas, meadows and fields.
- There are about 2 dozen varieties of chamomiles, including some that are poisonous.
- The Roman or English chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*) is similar looking, though is a shorter growing plant and tends to have a more bitter taste than the German chamomile. Both are used for medicinal purposes interchangeably, though they belong to different genus.
- Almost all varieties share the same daisy-like appearance – white flower petals with yellow centers. Roman chamomile is generally shorter than German chamomile.
- The word chamomilla comes from the Greek chamos (ground) and melos (apple). Both the flowers and the leaves have a mild apple-like scent.
- Egyptians, Romans and Greeks used chamomile to treat many conditions. Chamomile's medicinal history is due to its anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, anti-allergenic, and sedative properties. It has been used around the world to treat digestive issues, rheumatic problems, rashes and other skin conditions, allergies (though is also a ragweed relative), and to reduce anxiety and insomnia. Preparations include teas, salves, lotions, capsules, compresses and vapors.
- While chamomile is often recognized as a sleep promoting herb, it was also known as a sure preventative of nightmares.
- In Germany, chamomile is licensed for medicinal use: for teas, topical ointments, inhalants, and bath infusions.
- Chamomile oil, though a beautiful blue color, can be added to shampoos to bring out highlights to blonde hair.
- Chamomile flowers can be used to create a yellow-brown fabric dye. *Anthemis tinctoria* has a completely yellow flower which can be used for a yellow fabric dye.
- The cheerful white daisy-like flowers symbolized patience in adversity to the Victorians.
- Air dry the flowers in a single layer, on screens and away from direct sunlight, before storing them in airtight containers. Stems can also be cut, gathered and hung to dry.

Did You Know?



- Chamomile flowers can be used fresh or dried to make tea. The tea is often said to promote relaxation, stress-relief and sleep.
- The petals are edible and can be used fresh in salads or the flavor can be infused in other beverages, oatmeal, syrups or incorporated into fruit dishes. In addition, they are used in sleep pillows, potpourri, bath tea blends and other cosmetic and craft uses.

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