



Chamomile

Matricaria chamomilla/recutita

There are a number of different Chamomiles, here, we are focusing on the 'most used medicinally', German Chamomile. It grows as an annual, not to be confused with Roman Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*) which is a perennial and not used much medicinally. They are both

members of the Daisy or Asteraceae family.

Identification: This annual germinates with warm spring sunshine. With fine soft feathery foliage, it grows usually to about 50 -80cm high, depending on soil and position. Best in full sun, with a free-draining loam, though it is quite tolerant, except doesn't like shade. The flowers, in profusion are tiny daisies, composed of a ring of white petals around a golden mounded centre. They have a fragrance like a cross between freshly cut hay and apples. The name is derived from Greek ground apple because of its scent.

(Image https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matricaria_chamomilla#/media/File:Matricaria_February_2008-1.jpg)

Cultivation: Chamomile, as with most annuals, is grown from seed. Simply prepare an area that is in full sun with free draining soil and scatter your seed. Wait for them to grow and start blooming. It is easy and the more you pick the flowers, the more they are stimulated to produce more blooms. Make sure you leave some flowers to mature, to save some seed for next year. When the plants have died off in the autumn, put them in the compost, as they are 'compost accelerators'.

Part used: The flowers.

Companion Planting: An infusion of Chamomile is useful a spray on seedlings and newly transplanted crops to prevent 'damping off' and also to prevent mildew in plants, particularly for courgettes and cucumbers. Chamomile is an excellent companion in the garden, it assists most other plants grow better and enhances their flavour, esp. Cabbages and Mint. It likes to grow in the company of mint, peppermint, cabbages and onions.

Chamomile Flowers: A. Yellow disc florets B. White ray florets (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matricaria_chamomilla)

Energetic Character: Chamomile is bitter, neutral, warm and moist.

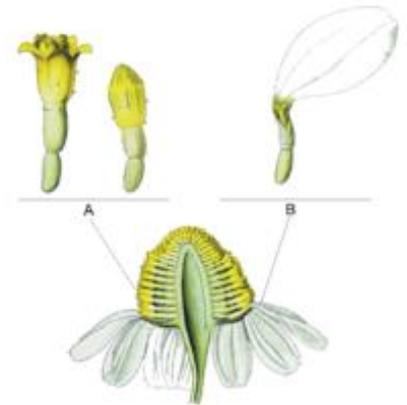
Constituents: Chamomile is a complex chemical cocktail. Its constituents include volatile oils (including the sesquiterpenoids matricarin, matricin, farnesol also chamazulene farnesene), flavonoids (including apigenin, apigetrin, apiin, quercetin, quercimeritrin, luteolin, rutin and patuletin) glycosides, tannins, phenols, coumarins (including aesculetin, scopoletin, and umbelliferone), plant acids (including anisic, caffeic, syringic and vinillic), salicylates, polysaccharides and phytosterols (including campesterol, cholesterol, sitostanol, sitosterol, stigmasterol, taraxasterol). Minerals; calcium, iodine, magnesium, potassium, iron, manganese, zinc, Vitamins; A, niacin, riboflavin and C.

Therapeutic Actions: Carminative, anti-spasmodic, anti-coagulant, anti-diarrheal, mild sedative, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, anti-catarrhal, anti-allergic, digestive tonic, potentially anti-cancer, mild analgesic and vulnerary (wound healer). A very useful herb.

Medicinal Uses: The Flowers have a strong action on the nervous system and help reduce the effects of stress, tension and promote a peaceful sleep. Chamomile can help relieve headaches brought on by stress or over concentration and is one of the best remedies for nervous indigestion. Used also for stomach cramps, colic, colitis, ulcers, gastritis, diverticulitis, irritable bowel, diarrhoea or constipation and other similar conditions. A great gut herb! Some research is indicating it may inhibit cancer cells.

As it is a mild analgesic it helps relieve pain especially if the pain is of neuralgic origin or by damage to nerve function. Chamomile can slow down rapid heartbeats caused by fear and tension, also useful for nausea in pregnancy and travel sickness.

This is a herb with a soothing gentle action, safe to use with babies and small children. It is useful for conditions



such as colic, teething, measles, asthma or croup (infusion or inhalation), colds, earache, diarrhoea, sore eyes, conjunctivitis, fevers and eczema. Medical doctors in Germany, France and Spain highly regard the benefits of Chamomile and prescribe it widely for babies and children.

Externally, an infusion is used as an eyewash; use a strong infusion for haemorrhoids in a sitz bath, same as for candida, for heat rash, ulceration and wound healing.

Preparations and Use

Infusion: 2 tsp dried flowers or 2 Chamomile tea bags. Pour boiling water over, place a saucer on top to assist to retain the volatile oils. Leave 5 minutes then drink, you can sweeten with a little honey. Add orange flowers at bedtime to help insomnia. It can also be used as a digestive aid; simply on its own or you can add other herbs such as aniseed, dill, mint, orange peel or cinnamon.

Steam inhalation: For respiratory conditions use ¼ cup of Chamomile flowers to a litre of boiling water in a bowl, cover head and bowl with a towel and inhale steam. A strong decoction can be used in ointments for insect bites, eczema, anal or vulval irritations and mouthwash for inflamed gums.

Essential oil: Use in creams, ointments, massage oils, lotions and inhalations. Good quality essential oil of Chamomile is very expensive. So if it is a bargain, odds are it is not pure, or is old stock. You could make your own infused flower oil, not as concentrated, still a very useful treatment.

Dosage: Tincture of Chamomile; use 3–15 mls daily for adults.

⊗ **Cautions:** *Don't use essential oil of Chamomile during pregnancy. A herbal infusion of the flowers is OK though. Like all herbs and spices that have a calming effect, Chamomile when taken in excess can cause lethargy and debilitation. The flowers contain a lot of pollen and can cause allergies for some people but in most cases it aids people who suffer from allergies. What a paradox!*

"Chamomylle... is very agreeing unto the nature and man, and... is good against weariness... - William Turner (?1508-1568), English Physician, Herbalist and Reformer.

Culinary Uses: Apart from Chamomile tea, this is not generally considered a culinary herb, though if this is a herb you really like the taste and smell, you could experiment in the kitchen...

Happy Belly Tea Blend - Makes 1 quart of dried, loose tea. With a mix of anti-inflammatory, carminative and toning herbs, this blend is just the thing to support a chronically unhappy belly. Drink 2-4 cups daily for best results.

1 c Tulsi, ¾ c Chamomile, ¾ c Meadowsweet, ¾ c Gotu Kola, ½ c Marshmallow leaf, ¼ c Rose petals.

Combine all herbs and store in a clean, dry quart jar in a dark place. To prepare tea, use 1 Tbsp tea mixture for every cup of water. Pour hot water over the herbs, cover and steep for at least 10 minutes before straining. Longer brews will extract more constituents from the herbs but will result in a more bitter and less aromatic tea. May be served hot or iced. Thanks to Rachael Keener, Herbalist from Urban Moonshine

who created it. <https://www.urbanmoonshine.com/blog/chamomile-favorite-uses-recipes/>

History & Mystery: Chamomile has a great deal of history as a medicinal and a sacred herb.

Folk names - There are many, including; Ground apple, earth apple, camomile, wild chamomile, German chamomile, English chamomile, Russian chamomile, Italian chamomile (maybe it ought to be called 'European chamomile'), scented mayweed, garden chamomile, lawn chamomile, manzanilla, noble chamomile, and white chamomile...

Ruling planet – Sun. **Element** – Water. **Powers** attributed – A money attractant. Some smart gamblers go to the extent of washing their hands in a Chamomile flower infusion. Used for clearing negative energies, a sleep incense, to attract love and scattered around your property is said to bless and protect.

Chamomile is native to Europe and Asia and has been used as a healing remedy for thousands of years. Its first recorded use is by the early Egyptians who dedicated it to Gods because of their belief in its curative powers. It was widely used in medieval times not only for medicine but also as a strewing herb for floors and for making garlands and chaplets for maidens.

"To comfort the braine, smel to chamomill, eate sage... wash measurably, sleep reasonably, delight to heare melody and singing." - Ram's Little Dodoen 1606. Good advice to all...

***Advisory Note:** This text is given a general guidance. If any adverse reactions occur or symptoms persist, please contact a qualified Medical Herbalist or Doctor immediately

