



Apothecary rose
Rosa gallica var. officinalis



International Herb of the Year 2012

Since medieval times the rose, originating in Persia, was cultivated in monasteries throughout Europe for its use in ritual, scent, cosmetics and medicine. Old fashion roses of which there are many varieties have the best scent. Thought of by many as symbol of love, in the East a symbol of virtue, for the Romans a symbol of festivity. Many of the original roses have been hybridised. The oldest garden rose known and cultivated in the Western World is the Apothecary Rose.

- Family** Rosaceae
- Common names** Gallic Rose, French Rose, Red Rose of Lancaster, Rose of Povins and Apothecary
- History** Reputed to have been brought from Damacus to Gaul (France) by Thiabaut le Chansonier in the thirteenth century.
- Description** Spreading thorny stems to a height of 100cm. The leathery, oval to elliptical leaflets are smooth, dullish green above, and more hairy below. The strongly scented semi double flowers generally grow singly; or in groups of two to four. Flowers rose pink. Deciduous shrub.
- Cultivation** Soil should be well drained rich loam. Easily grown as garden specimen. Open sunny or semi shade position. For propagation take cuttings in autumn or seeds from the hips.
- Uses**
- Parts Used:* Petals when first opened. Rose hips when ripe. Leaf.
- Household:* Petals can be used for pot pourri. Flowers and rose hips used in arrangements.
- Cosmetic:* Rose oil for aromatherapy. Rose water for perfume. Petals can be made into beads. Rose petals were used to perfume the body, and sweeten the breath. Rose powder was popular.
- Culinary:* Petals sprinkled in salads. Petals can be pickled or crystallised. Hips used in syrups, and because of high Vitamin C often eaten when there is little fruit available. Red rose petals considered the best. Leaf for a tea.
- Warning:** Rose thorns can cause infection in some people if scratched or have a thorn embedded.

Medicinal Hips made into syrup high in Vitamin C Rose water soothes the skin and conjunctivitis. Rose vinegar can relief headaches caused by hot sun. Rose cream can relief chapped hands.

Recommended by Arabian doctors for tuberculosis and pulmonary complaints. Recognised for its astringent and binding properties. Good for coughs, chest complaints, mouth ulcers, eye aches, and inflammations.

It is best to harvest petals on a dry day before flowers are fully opened, remove stamens and dry quickly to retain colour and smell. Store in tin container and use within four months will ensure medicinal properties are still present.

Rose Hip Syrup

This is a World War II recipe.

1kg Rose Hips

1kg Caster Sugar

Water

Jelly Bag or something similar.

- Bring to the boil 2 litres of water.
- Add chopped or minced rose hips and bring back to the boil.
- Remove from the heat and infuse for 30 minutes.
- Drip through jelly bag.
- Return pulp residue to pan plus 1 litre of water.
- Bring to the boil and infuse for 30 minutes.
- Discard residue.
- Combine the 2 lots of strained juice In a clean pot bring to the boil and boil until liquid volume has decreased by half.
- Remove from heat add sugar stir until dissolved.
- Pour into sterilised jars or bottles and seal.

References

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Grieve, Mrs. A Modern Herbal

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