

# Cornflowers

## Also known as

centaurea cyanus, Casse Lunette, Bachelor's Buttons, Bluebonnet, Blue Bow, Centaury, Cyani, Hurtsickle, and Bluecap.

## Introduction

Cornflower is a common wildflower that has been cultivated as a garden flower for centuries. Originally a native of the Near East, cornflower now grows wild over much of Europe and the temperate regions of North America. The cornflower gets its formal name from a minor goddess, Cyanus, and its genus name from a mythical Centaur (from the Greek Centaurea), whose name was Chiron. Chiron was a renowned herbalist in Greek mythology, and is credited with teaching mankind about the healing power of herbs. In many areas of the U.S., cornflowers are considered invasive weeds, despite the fact that they are also sought after garden flowers. They are annuals and biennials that often self sow and reseed themselves, making them difficult to eradicate. Cornflower has been used medicinally for its astringent and antiseptic properties. Famed herbalist Nicholas Culpepper claimed that combining cornflowers with plantain or comfrey could be used as a remedy against the poison of a scorpion. An infusion made by soaking the flower petals in water was used as an eyewash to refresh tired eyes and restore sight. It is also used as an astringent mouthwash to help heal mouth ulcers and to clean and disinfect wounds. They got the name Bachelor's buttons in Victorian England because young women would wear them as a sign of availability.

## Constituents

anthocyanins, coumarins, flavonoids,

## Parts Used

Flowers predominantly, but seldom the leaves and seeds.

## Typical Preparations

Infusion, poultice

## Summary

Cornflower is still used as an eyewash in some parts of France. The mild astringent and antiseptic qualities make it particularly useful against conjunctivitis and inflammation around the eyes. In addition, cornflower is often added to shampoos or the infusion used as a hair rinse to help treat eczema of the scalp. A douche made of a decoction of cornflower can be used in cases of candida (yeast infections). Also of important note; the flowers have been used to create a natural blue dye for centuries.

## **Precautions**

There are no harmful effects reported or noted in the use of cornflower.