

Helichrysum Flowers Profile

Also known as

Helichrysum arenarium, Everlasting, Immortelle, Curry Plant, and Yellow Chaste Weed.

Introduction

A native to the Mediterranean, the golden yellow flower heads of the helichrysum are collected before they open for herbal use to make aromatic, spicy, and slightly bitter teas. The name is derived from the Greek: helios meaning sun, and chrysos meaning gold. The Greeks and Romans used it as a wound healing poultice. Traditionally it has also been used for a variety of skin infections. The leaves have high levels of anti-oxidants that help to speed the healing process and the formation of scar tissue. In areas of South Africa it has been used as an aphrodisiac and also as a food. Usually it is seen as a garden ornamental.

Constituents

Helichrysum contains flavonoids, notably naringenin, helichrysin, kaempferol glucosides, apigenin, luetolin, quercetin, scopoletin, umbelliferone, and essential oil.

Parts Used

The flower.

Typical Preparations

Helichrysum flowers are often used to improve the appearance of herbal teas. They are a key ingredient in the Zahraa tea popular in the Middle East. Any tea containing helichrysum should be strained before drinking.

Summary

Helichrysum is a traditional diuretic. Its flavonoids soothe gastrointestinal and gallbladder spasms, and the bitters in the herb promote gastric and pancreatic secretions, improving digestion, especially of fats. Some recent research suggests that the flavonoids in helichrysum may prevent the oxidation of cholesterol in the linings of arteries into forms that create atherosclerotic plaques.

Precautions

Avoid if there are gallstones.