

Flower Power



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When we think of spring and summer, we think of the warm weather, the lush vegetation, the sunny days and the thousands of colorful flowers throughout the landscape. Did you know some of these pretty flowers may also help you improve your health?

Healing flowers

Botanical medicine is gaining popularity; herbs have a multitude of medical actions and in many cases have fewer side effects than medications. The parts typically used on a plant or tree are the leaves, roots, bark, seeds or flowers. Here are some medicinal flowers you may find useful in your day-to-day activities.

Echinacea

Echinacea, or purple coneflower, is probably one of the more commonly known herbs. The echinacea root and the aboveground plant, including the flowers, have been shown to have medicinal properties. There are three types of echinacea that are used medically; they are *Echinacea purpurea*, *Echinacea angustifolia* and *Echinacea pallida*. A number of studies have shown that echinacea is beneficial for the early treatment of acute upper respiratory tract infections. Studies have also shown that echinacea is effective in reducing the frequency, duration and severity of common cold symptoms.

Chamomile

The flowers of German chamomile have a long history of use for digestive and intestinal complaints. Chamomile has been shown to be effective in relieving stomach upset and cramping. Chamomile tea has been shown to be helpful in treating insomnia and nervous tension. Chamomile has also been shown to help protect the inner lining of the mouth during radiation and chemotherapy.

Calendula

Calendula flowers have been shown to have wound healing and anti-inflammatory properties. It has been shown to improve recovery from skin burns and it has also been shown to stop bleeding and reduce skin and inner mouth inflammation.

Passionflower

The aboveground parts of passionflower, including the flowers, have been shown to have a profound effect on mood. Studies have shown that passionflower helps relieve anxiety and is helpful in treating adjustment disorders. Passionflower has been shown to be effective for mild insomnia. Given its calming effect, passionflower is a good addition to a smoking cessation plan to help ease withdrawal symptoms.