

Chamomile

Latin Name: *Matricaria rectita* (German)
or *Chamaemelum nobile* (Roman)

Also known as: Ground Apple, Wild Chamomile, Camomile, German Chamomile, Roman (or English) Chamomile, Manzanilla (in Latin America)

Scientific Classification

Chamomile is a common name for several daisy-like plants. German chamomile and Roman chamomile are the two major herb types used for health purposes.

Family: Asteraceae – aster, daisy, sunflower family
Compositae – in earlier classifications

Genus: Matricaria – mayweed

Species: *Matricaria recutita* – German chamomile

Genus: Chamaemelum – dogfennel

Species: *Chamaemelum nobile* – Roman chamomile
Anthemis nobilis – in earlier classifications

Influence on the Body	(PRINCIPAL ACTIONS are listed in CAPITAL LETTERS)
<i>Addictions</i>	ALCOHOLISM • DRUG ADDICTION • SMOKING (calms nerves) • DRUG WITHDRAWAL
<i>Blood and Circulatory System</i>	blood disorders • blood purifier • POOR CIRCULATION • dropsy (edema due to poor heart function) • hemorrhage
<i>Body System</i>	tonic (increases energy and strength throughout the body) • stimulant (increases internal heat, dispels internal chill and strengthens metabolism and circulation) • ABSCESSSES • air pollution
<i>Cancer</i>	tumors
<i>Digestive Tract</i>	APPETITE STIMULANT • aromatic (has a spicy taste, contains volatile oils which aid digestion and relieve gas) • bitter (stimulates digestive juices and improves appetite) • heartburn • DIGESTION • INDIGESTION • nausea • stomach upset • stomach cramps • COLIC • carminative (brings warmth, circulation, relieves intestinal gas discomfort, and promotes peristalsis) • ulcerations • peptic ulcers • colitis • constipation • diarrhea • diverticulitis • expels GAS • hemorrhoids • expels worms • parasites

<i>Ears</i>	earaches • dizziness
<i>Eyes</i>	sore eyes • eye wash
<i>First Aid</i>	wounds • open sores • bruises • sprains
<i>Infections and Immune System</i>	childhood diseases • colds • antibiotic • antifungal • coughs • reduces FEVERS • flus • measles • spleen • typhoid
<i>Inflammation</i>	anti-inflammatory
<i>Liver</i>	gallstones • jaundice • stimulates liver • sluggish liver
<i>Lungs and Respiratory System</i>	bronchial tubes • BRONCHITIS • mucous discharge • expectorant (loosens and removes phlegm in the respiratory tract) • lungs • asthma
<i>Mouth and Throat</i>	teething • TOOTHACHE • sore throat • throat gargle
<i>Muscles</i>	MUSCLE PAIN • leg cramps
<i>Nervous System</i>	NERVINE (improves nerve function) • anxiety • NERVOUS DISORDERS • INSOMNIA • calmative (gently calms nerves) • sedative (calming, exerts soothing or tranquilizing effect) • SLEEP • headaches • migraine headaches • relieves pain • anodyne (relieves pain and reduces nerve excitability) • spasms • HYSTERIA
<i>Pain</i>	pain
<i>Reproductive System</i>	reliever <i>Female</i> : • menstrual regulator • painful MENSTRUATION • emmenagogue (promotes menstrual flow) • menstrual cramps • BREAST CYSTS • UTERUS
<i>Skin, Tissues & Hair</i>	gangrenous sores • callouses • CORNS • dandruff
<i>Urinary Tract</i>	bladder problems • kidneys • diuretic (increases urine flow) • bedwetting

Key Properties:

- NERVES – calms and heals nerves, mildly sedative and anti-spasmodic
- DIGESTIVE AID – increases appetite and relieves gas
- analgesic – relieves pain
- boosts immunity
- emmenagogue – promotes menstrual flow

Primarily affecting: NERVES • STOMACH • UTERUS

History	<p>Early Egyptian physicians used chamomile for fevers. The Greeks called it 'ground apple' (kamai for 'on the ground' and melon for 'apple'), due to the apple-like scent of its flower and the way it grows as low ground-cover. The Greeks and Romans used the herb for headaches.</p> <p>Anglo-Saxons believed it was one of the nine sacred herbs given to humans by the God Woden. Nicholas Culpepper, an English herbalist, claimed that chamomile had the ability to take away weariness and ease pain wherever it was applied. English author, Beatrix Potter had Peter Rabbit's mother give him chamomile tea after his frightful adventure.</p> <p>Chamomile has been used for centuries to quiet an upset stomach, promote urination, relieve colic, and induce sleep. The Cherokee Indians used it in cases of colic, bowel complaints and vomiting.</p> <p>In 1921, a German manufacturer introduced a topical form of chamomile which became a popular treatment for a wide variety of skin disorders. Germany's Commission E report authorizes the use of various topical chamomile preparations for diseases of the skin and mouth. It has authorized taking chamomile internally for pain and inflammation in the stomach and intestines and using inhaled chamomile-vapor for asthma and other lung problems.</p> <p>Today in Europe, chamomile is used to treat inflammations and irritations of the skin and mucous membranes, soothe aches, and heal cuts, sores and bruises.</p>
Attributes	<p>Chamomile calms and soothes irritating conditions, is anti-inflammatory, and is anti-spasmodic. It is used for digestive problems, headaches, stress, irritability, nervousness, allergies, and swollen or inflamed tissues.</p> <p><u>Key Components: (including, but not limited to)</u></p>
Nutrients	<p>Vitamins <u>A</u> • <u>Calcium</u> • <u>Iron</u> • <u>Magnesium</u> • <u>Manganese</u> • <u>Potassium</u> • <u>Zinc</u> • <u>Bitter</u></p>
Nerves	<p>Although chamomile is a stimulant, its abilities to equalize circulation and strengthen, quiet and heal nerve endings, result in soothing the nervous system and relaxing the body. In Europe, chamomile is commonly used as a sleep-inducing</p>

herb. It quickly helps one to settle down for quality sleep and is often used for preventing migraine headaches.

Digestion

The tea tones and heals the complete digestive tract. It improves appetite and aids digestion by increasing blood circulation in the intestinal tract, reducing gas and muscle spasms, and helping expel worms and parasites.

Those who have sinus troubles often have bowel problems as well. Using chamomile tea as a digestive aid can help get bowels moving properly and relieve other congestions in the body.

Muscle Spasm

Drinking chamomile tea is associated with an increase in urinary levels of glycine, an amino acid that has been shown to relieve muscle spasms. This may explain why the tea appears to be helpful in easing menstrual, gastro-intestinal and leg muscle cramps.

Glycine also is known to act as a nerve relaxant. Scientists believe that the tea seems to act as a mild sedative for this reason.

Children

Chamomile is popular as a children's remedy for earaches, convulsions, teething, calming and relaxing nerves, stomach disorders and controlling bedwetting. At first it may seem that drinking tea before going to bed would not be advisable to control bedwetting, but it is very effective. It seems to help children relax while going to sleep, thereby allowing them to feel the urge to urinate.

The medical professions in France and Spain recognize chamomile as a valuable tonic for the young on such problems as colic, upset stomachs and sleep difficulties. It is reportedly useful as a remedy for nightmares (especially in children).

Fever

Chamomile is used as a relaxing diaphoretic (to induce perspiration), making it excellent for fevers and colds.

External Use

As a poultice, chamomile reduces swelling without drawing the poison to a head. It can often prevent or remove gangrene. Chamomile is excellent for bruises and sprains by crushing the herb, moistening with vinegar, and applying topically.

It also eases pain, itch and irritation of the skin. One double-blind study of 161 individuals found chamomile cream

	equally effective as .25 percent hydrocortisone cream for the treatment of eczema.
<i>Anti-bacterial</i>	Researchers found that drinking chamomile tea was associated with a significant increase in urinary levels of hippurate (a breakdown product of certain plant-based compounds known as phenolics) which have been associated with increased antibacterial activity. This could help explain why the tea is able to boost the immune system and fight infections associated with colds.
<i>Anti-inflammatory</i>	<p>Studies have found that chamazulene, a component of the essential oil of German chamomile, has both anti-inflammatory and antiseptic activities. Chamazulene is also found in Roman chamomile, but in lesser concentrations. Its anti-inflammatory activity stems from its ability to inhibit inflammatory prostaglandin (hormone-like substance) production.</p> <p>Chamomile is contained in many skin creams and, because it is virtually anti-toxic, helps to prevent skin infections. A chamomile extract also proved effective in promoting wound healing. (1)(2)(3)</p> <p>The essential oil of chamomile can be applied directly to the skin, but it is best diluted in a carrier oil or lotion. Traditionally, chamomile extracts are used topically to treat diaper rash and orally to treat mouth infections.</p>
<i>Women</i>	As a uterine agent, chamomile (when taken cold) relieves congestion and stimulates menstrual flow. It has been effectively used for menstrual cramps as well. Chamomile (manzanilla) is found in almost all Latin American homes for use before, during and after childbirth.
<i>Hair</i>	Chamomile will add luster and golden tint highlights when used as a hair rinse. It has also been used to overcome dandruff.
<i>Addictions</i>	Chamomile has been used very successfully as a toxin cleanser for long-time drug users.
<i>Herb Substitute</i>	For those who find yarrow bitter, chamomile often makes an excellent substitute.
<i>Other Uses</i>	Industrial manufacture of essential oils of the chamomile flowers:

	<p>Roman chamomile essential oil is used in perfume, shampoo powder, hair rinse, and flavoring for tobacco.</p> <p>German chamomile essential oil is used in the perfumery process for blending compounds, often in combination with oils of patchouli, lavender and oak moss.</p> <p>It is also used as a solvent for platinum chloride in the process of coating glass and porcelain with platinum.</p>
Herb Parts Used	The entire flower
Preparations and Remedies	<p>Chamomile is prepared as bulk dried flowers, tea, capsules, tincture, cream salve, or as a bath product. When given warm, chamomile will favor perspiration and soften the skin. The cold infusion acts as a tonic and is more suitable for stomach disorders, typhoid fever, and fevers in general.</p>
<i>Tea/ Infusion</i>	<p>Chamomile tea or tincture are valuable for insomnia and nervousness. As a digestive aid it improves appetite; relieves spasms and inflammatory conditions of the gastrointestinal tract; and helps heal peptic ulcers. The tea or tincture are used for menstrual cramps, and kidney, bladder and spleen problems.</p> <p>When making the tea, hold in the essential oils by using a cover. Steep (do not boil) fresh or dried flowers for 10 to 30 minutes in hot water. Boiling chamomile flowers will allow volatile oils (possessing much of the therapeutic value) to escape.</p> <p><i>Yarrow Tea:</i> (see YARROW preparations)</p>
<i>Eye Wash</i>	Use chamomile tea as a wash for open sores of the skin or irritated eyes. Chamomile tea bags may be steeped in a small amount of hot water, allowed to cool and placed on closed eyes as well.
<i>Compress/ Fomentation</i>	Apply as a compress, fomentation (towel soaked in infusion and placed on affected area), or cream for sore muscles, swellings and painful joints.
<i>Poultice</i>	When used externally as a poultice, chamomile has a drawing and cooling effect.
<i>Enemas</i>	<i>Garlic Enema:</i> (see GARLIC preparations)
<i>Relaxing Herb Bath</i>	Three methods:

<p><i>Hair Rinse</i></p> <p><i>Essential Oil</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put four to eight ounces chamomile (dry or fresh) in a thin muslin cloth bag and put in bath water. 2. Make a gallon of tea and add to the bath. 3. For soaking applications, use one teaspoonful (5 ml) of the tincture in a basin of Himalayan or Real Salt water and soak as needed. <p>Make one quart of a strong chamomile tea and use as a rinse at lukewarm temperature after shampooing. It improves color and texture of the hair and fights dandruff.</p> <p>Chamomile essential oil is especially helpful when applied to areas of rheumatic joint pain.</p>
<p>Safety</p>	<p>Bulk dried flowers are widely available. Herbal chamomile is sometimes confused with a similar-looking plant which does not have the same medicinal qualities, is bad-tasting, and is highly allergenic. Even when dried, chamomile flowers should be white and yellow-colored (not brown or dingy), and there should be a fresh, characteristic, fruity smell (rather than a musty odor).</p> <p>Chamomile is an herb that is beneficial to use during pregnancy. It relaxes the body for sound sleep and helps with digestive and bowel problems.</p> <p>Rare allergic reactions occur in persons sensitive to ragweed (another member of the aster family), or the many varieties of chrysanthemum.</p> <p>Chamomile is listed on the Federal Drug Administration's GRAS (generally recognized as safe) list.</p>
<p>Plant Profile</p> <p><i>Description</i></p>	<p><i>Natural Habitat:</i> German chamomile is indigenous to Europe and northwest Asia and naturalized in North America and elsewhere. Major suppliers of German chamomile include Argentina, Egypt, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Hungary and Poland.</p> <p>Roman (or English) chamomile is native to England, western Europe to Northern Ireland, and now grows other places including North America.</p> <p>The uses of both German and Roman chamomile parallel each other. It is generally considered that both have similar</p>

effects on the body, although German chamomile may be slightly stronger. Most research has been done on German chamomile, which is more commonly used everywhere except in England (where Roman chamomile is more often used).

Chamomiles flower from late spring to late summer and have an attractive apple-like fragrance. Teas made with the herb are aromatic and flavorful. The herb itself has a slightly bitter taste.

Both German and Roman chamomiles have the same characteristic thready, lacy leaves, and small, daisy like blossoms, but the plants have different growth habits.

German chamomile is an annual (must be grown from seed each year) and grows much taller (one to two feet high) than its Roman cousin. The many terminal flower heads are about a half an inch in diameter. The flowers have a yellow center surrounded by ten to twenty white ray petals.

The Roman (or English) species is a low-growing perennial (lives for more than two years growing back from a persistent rootstock in the spring) which spreads gracefully over the earth, reaching only six to twelve inches in height. It is often grown in herb gardens as a low, mat-like ground cover and can be mowed similar to a lawn. It thrives in dry, light, sandy soil in full sunlight. The flower heads are about an inch across and sparse when compared to German chamomile. A solitary flower head sits atop each stalk. The yellow center is encircled with white daisy-like petals (though sometimes absent).

Chamomile contributes to the health of the soil, and keeps away pests, for which it has been called 'the plant's physician.'

Growing Chamomile

Planting:

Both German and Roman chamomile varieties are best sown in early spring for flowering by early summer. Direct-seed sow (on the surface and pressed in) German chamomile seeds six inches apart and provide full sun, regular water, and good drainage.

It is better to grow Roman chamomile seeds first in pots and then transplant. As a perennial, the plant self-propagates each year, and plant starts can be made by root division or layering runners. Space new plantings six inches apart.

<i>Harvesting</i>	Harvest the entire, full-bloom flower in the morning, just after the dew has evaporated on a warm, dry day. Use the herb fresh or spread flowers out to dry on screens or paper.
<i>Storage</i>	Store in tightly sealed containers when dry. Flowers may be frozen for up to six months to retain freshness.