

## CHAMOMILE, ROMAN



### *Chamaemelum nobile*

[kam-AY-mel-um no-BIL-ee]

(*Anthemis nobilis*)

**Family:** Compositae

**Names:** chamomile, common chamomile, English chamomile, true chamomile, garden chamomile, camomile, Maythen, Chamaimelon, camomyle, camamylke, Ground Apple, maythen, Whig Plant, Cama chamomile romaine (French); Heermannchen, Gartenkamille, Römische Kamille, Doppel-Kamille (German); roomse kamille (Dutch); camomilla romana, manzanilla (Italian); manzanilla romana, manzanilla officinal (Spanish); babunj, babunaj (Arabic)

**Description:** Aromatic perennial growing to 20 inches. Has feathery leaves and daisylike heads.

**Cultivation:** Prefers light, well-drained soil in full sun. Propagate by seed sown in spring or autumn, or by division in spring. Variants are sterile and can only be divided. Chamomile for lawns is planted 4 inches apart and weeded regularly until established. Plants may deteriorate in very cold or wet winters, but usually recover. The flowers are harvested as they open in summer and distilled for oil or dried for use in infusions, liquid extracts and dermatological creams. Dried flowers keep for one year only.

**Constituents:** up to 1.75% volatile oil (including tiglic and angelic acid esters, chamazulene and isadol), sesquiterpene lactones, mucilage, flavone glycosides, flavonoids, coumarins, and phenolic acids.

**Properties:** anti-spasmodic, carminative, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antiseptic, vulnerary, aromatic, bitter, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, nervine, sedative, tonic

**History:** Roman chamomile has long been valued as a medicinal plant in Britain. Although called Roman chamomile, this herb was not cultivated in Rome until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, probably arriving there from Britain. Roman chamomile has been called “the plant’s physician”: ailing garden plants are supposedly cured by planting chamomile beside them, and cut flowers revive and last longer with the addition of chamomile tea to the water. An infusion of it is also said to prevent damping off in seedlings. It was chamomile tea that Peter Rabbit’s mother administered to him after he had overindulged in Mr. McGregor’s vegetable garden. It was the Greeks of antiquity who named the plant *khamaimelon* (loosely “ground apple”), since it creeps along

the ground and the flowers have an applelike aroma. In the language of flowers, chamomile means patience in adversity. It was known as the herb of humility because, as a lawn plant, the more it was trodden on, the faster it grew. Chamomile was one of the nine sacred herbs of the Saxons who called maythen. The plant has a long association with young girls, or nymphs in the Dianic tradition. The Egyptians consecrated chamomile to the sun god Ra and planted it on graves as a symbol that the deceased would be reborn, as the sun is reborn each morning.

**Energetics:** bitter, spicy, neutral

**Meridians/Organs affected:** liver, stomach, lungs

**Medicinal Uses:** A remedy for the digestive system, Roman chamomile is often used interchangeably with German chamomile. However, an infusion of Roman chamomile has a more pronounced bitter action than its German namesake. It is an excellent treatment for nausea, vomiting, indigestion, and loss of appetite. It is also sedative, antispasmodic and mildly analgesic, and will relieve colic, cramps, and other cramping pains. By stimulating digestive secretions and relaxing the muscles of the gut, it helps normalize digestive function. Roman chamomile may also be taken for headaches and migraine, even by children. Its anti-inflammatory and antiallergenic properties make it helpful for irritated skin.

*Homeopathy:* Used for complaints caused by anger or too much caffeine

*Emotional Uses:* Chamomile works on the solar plexus chakra. It is very good for either children or adults who have temper tantrums, who express anger which is related to fear and who are prickly, over-sensitive and volatile. Chamomile quiets, relaxes and centers the person and gives a general sense of well-being, nourishment and security. It is for people who feel emotionally deprived, who feel unloved and uncared for. Chamomile generally helps to ease obstructions, to melt frozen panic or warm up inertia and allows for movement of some

kind. Taken as a tea, used as an oil, or burnt as an incense, whenever you feel in need of nourishment and mothering, chamomile can help to seal off the solar plexus and protect a person from draining people or places. In acute cases, put a few drops of the oil on a yellow silk scarf and tie around the solar plexus

#### **Aromatherapy Uses:**

**EXTRACTION:** essential oil by steam distillation of the flower heads

**CHARACTERISTICS:** a pale blue liquid (turning yellow on keeping) with a warm, sweet, fruity-herbaceous scent.

**BLENDS WELL WITH:** bergamot, clary sage, oakmoss, jasmine, labdanum, neroli, rose, geranium and lavender

**ACTIONS:** analgesic, anti-anemic, antineuralgic, antiphlogistic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, bactericidal, carminative, cholagogue, cicatrizant, digestive, emmenagogue, febrifuge, hepatic, hypnotic, nerve sedative, stomachic, sudorific, tonic, vermifuge, vulnerary

**CONSTITUENTS:** mainly esters of angelic and tiglic acids with pinene, farnesol, nerolidol, chamazulene, pinacarvone, cineol, among others

#### **USES:**

*Skin care:* acne, allergies, boils, burns, cuts, chilblains, dermatitis, earache, eczema, hair care, inflammations, insect bites, rashes, sensitive skin, teething pain, toothache, wounds  
*Circulation, Muscles and Joints:* arthritis, inflamed joints, muscular pain, neuralgia, rheumatism, sprains.

*Digestive System:* dyspepsia, colic, indigestion, nausea

*Genito-urinary system:* dysmenorrhea, menopausal problems, menorrhagia

*Nervous system:* headache, insomnia, nervous tension, migraine and stress-related complaints

*Other Uses:* Used in pharmaceutical antiseptic ointments and in carminative, antispasmodic and tonic preparations. Used extensively in cosmetics, soaps, detergents, high-class perfumes and hair and bath products. Used as a flavor ingredient in most major food categories, including alcoholic and soft drinks.

**Cautions:** Oil is a uterine stimulant, and not used in pregnancy.

**Flower Essence:** Calms and soothes the nerves; helps the release of tension, anxiety, and fear; supports deep relaxation; helps to turn frustration into acceptance.

**Ritual Uses:** Gender: Masculine; Planet: Sun; Element: Water; Part Used: Flowers; Basic Powers: Prosperity, Sleep, Love, Meditation. Use in prosperity charms to draw money. Add to incenses intended to bring on restful states for meditation. Induces sleep if burned. Chamomile is an ingredient used in many love potions. It is said that if you wash your hair and face in chamomile you will attract your beloved; another name for chamomile is love apples. To increase passion, sprinkle a little of the tea or flower water on sheets. Babies traditionally had a small bunch of chamomile hung over their cribs to protect them and keep them free of illness. Burn chamomile in the room of a dying person to ease their passage into the next world and to counter any fears they might have of letting go. Chamomile is a good herb to use for girls and young women and can be used in any ritual work to empower them.

**Cosmetic Uses:** An infusion of the flowers rubbed into the hair stimulates the growth and gives it a blond sheen.

**Cleansing Lotion:** for an oily skin: To a small handful of chamomile flowers (fresh or dry) and one of rosemary tops placed in a basin, add a pint of boiling water and leave until cold. Strain and place in the refrigerator for several hours, then dip in cloths, wring out excess moisture and apply to the face for 5-10 minutes, going over the procedure several times.

**Cleansing Lotion:** A simple but effective skin lotion is made by placing 2 handfuls of chamomile flowers (fresh or dry) in a saucepan and adding a pint of water. Simmer over a low

flame for 5-10 minutes, strain and let cool. Add a teaspoonful of witch hazel or lemon juice for every pint of liquid. Bottle and refrigerate.

**Cleansing Lotion:** Make up a pint of chamomile tea from a handful of flowers. Strain when cool and mix in 2 tablespoonsful of creamy milk and 1 tablespoonful each of lemon juice and witch hazel. Refrigerate for an hour and apply to the face and neck with lint pads.

#### *Chamomile Under-Eye Oil*

½ cup packed dried chamomile flowers  
4 oz good-quality oil suitable for use on the skin

1 Tbsp lemon juice

Pack the flowers into a jar large enough to hold them with a bit of headroom. Completely cover the flowers with the oil. Add a half inch or so over the top to make sure flowers don't stick out (at first they may float, but when they become thoroughly moistened, they sink). Place the jar in a sunny window for a week. Strain. Add the lemon juice. Mix thoroughly and put a small amount in a tiny bottle for immediate use. Refrigerate the rest. Use within a month. (The Herbal Epicure)

**Culinary Uses:** Roman chamomile foliage can be chopped and stirred into butter or sour cream that is used to top baked potatoes.

#### **Recipes:**

##### **Chamomile-marinated vegetable salad**

*For the dressing:*

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

2 1/2 tablespoons brewed chamomile tea, at room temperature

1 1/2 tablespoons julienned fresh basil leaves

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tablespoons olive oil

*For the salad*

2 plum tomatoes, cut into wedges

1/2 large green bell pepper; thinly sliced

1 yellow squash, cut into 1/2-inch slices

1/2 red onion, thinly sliced

2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon leaves

1 head of red leaf lettuce, washed and separated into leaves

Sift together the dry ingredients in a bowl. Cut the butter into small pieces and blend into the To prepare the dressing, combine the vinegar, tea, basil and garlic in a small mixing bowl and whisk in the olive oil until emulsified. To prepare the salad, place the tomatoes, bell pepper, squash, onion and tarragon in a large mixing bowl and combine. Let the salad marinate at room temperature for about 1 hour. Stir in the walnuts. Arrange 3 or 4 lettuce leaves on each plate and top with the vegetable mixture.

To brew chamomile tea, add 1/4 cup of boiling water to a cup containing 2 tea bags and let the tea infuse until cool. Strain off the amount needed for this recipe and save the rest to drink (you will need to dilute it).

### **Chamomile Cauliflower Soup**

6 chamomile tea bags

3 cups water

1 large head cauliflower, cut into 3-inch pieces

1/4 cup onions, chopped

2 celery ribs, chopped

1 Tbsp butter

salt and pepper to taste

Boil water and tea bags in large saucepan for 5 minutes. Remove tea bags, squeezing the excess liquid into the pan. Add the cauliflower to the tea, cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until tender. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the liquid. In small pan, sauté the onions and celery in the butter until the onions are clear. Put in a blender with the cauliflower, salt and pepper, and the reserved cooking liquid. Blend until smooth and serve. For thinner soup, reserve and add more liquid; for thicker soup reserve and add less.

### **Champagne Cardamon Strawberries with Chamomile Tea Sorbet**

1/2 c Sugar

1/4 c Champagne

1/8 ts Cardamon

3 Mint leaves

1 pt Tea sorbet

2 tsp Powdered sugar

3 Halved strawberries

Sugar tuile

Pour all ingredients in together adding champagne last.

### **Chamomile Beer**

12 oz chamomile herb

4 oz ground ginger

4 oz cream of tartar

35 grams saccharine

2 1/2 lbs sugar

2 oz burnt sugar

10 gallons water

Infuse the chamomile herb and ginger in 5 gallons of boiling water for 15 minutes in a covered vessel. Strain and pour on to the sugar and saccharine, and stir until dissolved. Then add the burnt sugar, cream of tartar, and 5 gallons of cold water. Mix well, add the yeast and ferment in the usual way.

### **Household Uses:**

Dye recipe:

1/2 pot Roman Chamomile

2 cups boiling water

2 tsp tin

1 Tbsp cream of tartar

1 lb wool

water

Make the dye ooze, and let it sit for about a week. Then skim off the green mold. You can either use premordanted wool or do the mordanting right in the dyebath. If you do the mordanting in the dyebath, dissolve the cream of tartar in 1 cup boiling water and add it to the bath. Then dissolve the tin in the other cup of boiling water and add that mixture to the bath. Wet the wool, place it in the bath, stir, and simmer for a half-hour to 1 hour, stirring every 5 minutes or so. Color: Clear orange.

### **Chamomile Calmer**

Chamomile flowers

2 cups plus 1 oz vodka

1 1/2 cup distilled water

1 1/2 cups sugar

Gather a rather large handful of fresh chamomile flowers and place into a flask. Add the alcohol, cap and shake thoroughly every

day for 40 days, giving it a little shake each morning and night. Bring to a boil the 1 ½ cups of water and as soon as it boils add the sugar. Boil for 5 or 5 minutes and then let cool thoroughly. Strain the chamomile flowers out of the alcohol, pressing to get all of the alcohol out. Filter and then add the sugar syrup. (Herbally Yours)

### **References:**

Cosmetics From the Earth, Roy Genders, Alfred Van der Marck Editions, 1985; ISBN: 0-912383-20-8

Culinary Herbs & Condiments, M. Grieve, Dover, 1971; ISBN: 0-486-21513-X

Dyeing the Natural Way, Frances E. Mustard, Greatlakes Living Press, 1977; ISBN: 0-915498-68-5

Encyclopedia of Herbs & Their Uses, Deni Bown, Dorling Kindersley, 1996; ISBN: 0-7894-0184-3

Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs, Scott Cunningham, Llewellyn Publications, 1982, ISBN: 978-0 87542-122-3

The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Andrew Chevallier, Dorling Kindersley, 1997; ISBN: 0-7894-1067-2

Flower Essences: A Basic Guide, Carol Rudd, Element Books; 1998; ISBN: 0-7607-1249-2

The Herbal Epicure, Carole Ottesen, Ballantine, 2001; ISBN: 0-345-43402-1

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Essential Oils, Julia Lawless, Element Books, 1995; ISBN: 1-56619-990-5

Magic and Medicine of Plants, Reader's Digest, 1986; ISBN: 0-89577-221-3

Magical Herbalism, Scott Cunningham, Llewellyn Publications, 1982, ISBN: 0-87542-120-2

A Woman's Book of Herbs, Elisabeth Brooke, The Women's Press, 1992; ISBN: 0-7043-4296-0

### **Resources:**

Companion Plants, [www.companionplants.com](http://www.companionplants.com)  
plants, seed

Crimson Sage, <http://www.crimson-sage.com>  
Plants

HERBALPEDIA™ is brought to you by The Herb Growing & Marketing Network, PO Box 245, Silver Spring, PA 17575-0245; 717-393-3295; FAX: 717-393-9261; email: herbworld@aol.com URL: <http://www.herbalpedia.com> Editor: Maureen Rogers. Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Material herein is derived from journals, textbooks, etc. THGMN cannot be held responsible for the validity of the information contained in any reference noted herein, for the misuse of information or any adverse effects by use of any stated material presented.