Jasmine - Fact Sheet

Latin Name: *Jasminum* or *Gelsimium*

Description

Jasmine is a shrub or vine which might be evergreen or deciduous (leaves fall off in autumn).

It has very thin, green leaves. The flowers can be white or pale yellow and are sweet smelling. They have around four to nine petals and two stamens.

Jasmine is native to the tropical and subtropical areas of Asia, Africa and Australasia. It grows in moist, well drained, sandy or clayey garden soil, and needs full sun or partial shade to grow well.

Modern Day Uses

- All over the world, jasmine tea is enjoyed for its pleasant taste, sweet smell and antioxidant properties.
- Jasmine is often used in skincare for its smell and soothing properties. You can find it in lotions, tonics and creams to treat dry, irritated and sensitive skin, as well as treating sunburn and rashes.
- The essential oil of jasmine is used in candles and oil burners to release its smell into a room. It has calming and mood uplifting effects.
- Jasmine plants are popular decorative plants for the garden.

Historical Uses

- In China, the flowers of the jasmine plant were used to make tea and in Ayurvedic medicine.
- The root of the jasmine was used in medicine to treat broken bones, and to reduce pain and headaches.
- The leaves were used to kill parasitic intestinal worms and purify the blood.
- The flower buds were used in the treatment of eye disorders, skin diseases and boils and ulcers.
- The entire jasmine plant was used as a hair decoration and a food garnishing.
Camomile – Fact Sheet

Latin Name: *Matricaria chamomilla*

**Description**

Camomile is an annual herb, native to most parts of Europe.

It has pale green, smooth multi-branched stems which are long and slender. The leaves are also long and narrow, oval in shape and bright green.

The flowers have a yellow centre with many, very small white petals surrounding it. The flowers are aromatic and both the flowers and leaves are edible.

This plant can grow from 1 to 2 feet high and grows best in a well drained soil with full sun and light.

**Modern Day Uses**

- Camomile tea is widely available in supermarkets throughout Europe. It is believed to aid sleep and have calming properties.
- Camomile is used in modern beauty products such as moisturiser to make the skin soft and pliable. It is also used in shampoo and conditioners to enhance the colour of blonde hair.
- In modern medicine, camomile is believed to have mild antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and sedative properties.
- Camomile essential oil is used in oil burners, candles and air fresheners because of its pleasant and soothing smell.

**Historical Uses**

- The ancient Egyptians considered camomile a holy gift from God and believed it could treat numerous diseases.
- In Europe, camomile was called a 'cure all' and was used in the treatment of any minor ailments. The Germans named the plant 'alles zutraut' meaning 'capable of anything'.
- Camomile has been grown for centuries in the English garden, not only as a decorative plant but a popular domestic medicine.
Rosemary – Fact Sheet

Latin Name: *Rosmarinus officinalis*

Description
Rosemary is a small, woody shrub covered in long, narrow leaves. It is a perennial herb and is native to the Mediterranean regions, but can be found growing in England and Italy.

The leaves of the shrub are dark green and needle-like while the flowers can be white, pink, purple or deep blue in colour.

The plant can reach 1.5m in height and grows best in a well-drained, loamy soil with lots of sun. It survives well in hot climates because it can withstand long droughts.

Modern Day Uses
- Rosemary is a popular culinary herb. For example, it is commonly used to make stuffing for lamb and pork, as well as flavouring scones and bread. Rosemary can be dried and when burnt upon a barbecue can be used to flavour the foods which are being cooked.
- Rosemary oil has a strong, pleasant smell and it is used in many beauty products, perfumes, incense and cleaning products.
- Rosemary is used in shampoo because it can treat dandruff, promote hair growth, balance oily hair and leave a pleasant smell after washing.
- With its bright flowers, the rosemary shrub is often grown as an ornamental plant for the garden.

Historical Uses
- In the Middle Ages, rosemary was considered a love charm. It was traditional for brides to wear a headdress of rosemary while the groom and wedding guests wore a sprig of rosemary.
- In the 16th century, it was believed that rosemary bushes planted outside a household would repel witches.
- During the 17th century, rosemary was used medicinally to cure jaundice and to restore speech to a mute.
- Rosemary oil became popular in the 18th century to promote hair growth and burnt rosemary was rubbed onto teeth to beautify them.
Lavender - Fact Sheet

**Latin Name:** *Lavendula*

**Description**
Lavender is found growing in southern Europe, northern and eastern Africa, the Mediterranean, southwest Asia and southeast India. Lavender can be an annual or perennial plant or shrub.

This plant is highly scented, and the essential oils are carried in the fine hairs that cover the leaves. The flowers grow on spikes above green or silvery-grey foliage.

The colour of the flowers can vary from blue, violet and lilac to, in rare cases, blackish purple or yellowish. Lavender grows best in dry, well-drained soil and in full sun.

**Modern Day Uses**
- Honey made from the nectar of lavender is a highly regarded food product, mostly being produced in areas of the Mediterranean.
- Lavender can be candied, or baked into puddings and desserts to create a floral and sweet flavour. Lavender can also be added to black or green teas.
- The essential oil from the lavender plant is often used in aromatherapy for its pleasant smell and relaxing properties. Flowers can be dried and placed in sachets to be put under pillows and aid sleep. When these dried flower sachets are hung in wardrobes or put into drawers they freshen the linen and ward off moths.

**Historical Uses**
- Lavender was used in ancient times as a scented herb to wash and cleanse with when added to water.
- Lavender is mentioned in the bible as one of the herbs used in the biblical Temple to prepare the holy essence.
- In Roman times, lavender was very expensive. One pound of lavender would have cost a farm labourer his entire monthly wage. The Romans had discovered that crushed lavender would release a soothing scent when burned.
- In medieval times powdered lavender was used as a condiment.
- In the 19th century lavender was used in lotions and ointments for the treatment of hysteria, nervous headaches, trapped wind and colic.