

Feverfew

Greetings again from the 'Herb Lady':

Herbs are making the news these days as alternative treatments to many ailments. Many of these herbs are growing just outside in our gardens or wild along roadsides.

One excellent example is feverfew. It's actually a member of the chrysanthemum family. In fact its name, feverfew, as you might suspect, comes from the fact that this plant actually reduces fevers.



Feverfew, also known as featherfew and bachelor's buttons, is native to southwest Europe and was brought to America originally as an ornamental. Recently feverfew has been gaining fame as an effective treatment for migraine headaches. Exactly how feverfew helps migraines remains unclear.

Even though it has been used traditionally to reduce fevers or treat migraines, it is being used for other ailments also. Feverfew may also help ease diseases caused by chronic inflammation, such as arthritis. The tea, drunk cold, may also relieve skin perspiration associated with migraines, and has been used to stimulate appetite, and improve digestion and kidney function. It may also relieve dizziness, tinnitus, and painful or sluggish menstruation. Its extracts have been claimed to relieve asthma, coughs, dermatitis and worms. Feverfew tea has been used as a mouth rinse to relieve toothaches. Because it is an aromatic plant with a strong and lasting odor, it has been used externally as an insect repellent and for treating insect bites.

Parts Used: Leaves and flowers in extract, infusion, and dried in capsules

Feverfew tea can be brewed by pouring a cup of boiling water over one to two teaspoons of dried leaves and allowing the mixture to sit for 10 minutes. One to two cups of tea daily may be used. Though feverfew is not unbearable, the taste is quite bitter. If you do not like the bitter taste, take feverfew in tablet, capsule, or tincture.



Possible Side Effects

- Side effects are uncommon, appearing mostly in long-time users if at all.
- Some people report stomach upset after taking feverfew supplements or ingesting the fresh leaves.
- Chewing the plant's fresh leaves can cause mouth sores and inflammation of mucous membranes in the mouth.
- Skin contact with the feverfew plant can cause a rash in some cases.

Cautions

- ***Avoid feverfew if you develop a rash after touching the fresh herb or have any type of sensitivity to other members of the same plant family (Asteraceae), such as daisies, asters, sunflowers, and chamomile.***
- **Pregnant women should not use the herb, and some people have developed mouth ulcers or experienced loss of taste from eating the fresh leaves.**