

ECHINACEA

The Purple Cone Flower



Echinacea Purpurea

When I was 16 years old, my mom decided to plant a large herb garden, complete with a little fish pond and waterfall. She ordered seeds of dozens of different herbs and planted them in various beds around the herb garden.

It took about two years for the herb garden to begin showing serious clumps of greenage here and there. However, it all looked like weeds to me; short weeds, tall weeds, stinky weeds, and good-smelling weeds.

Then, around mid-summer, a strip of “weeds” along the whole length of the garden began to bloom into big purple-and-yellow blossoms that were spectacular in beauty. I thought, “Wow, Mom finally got some good taste and planted flowers for a change.” I loved to visit the herb garden and stand in

the waist-high Purple Coneflowers and watch the fat bumblebees hop from cone to cone, gathering nectar. The blooms didn’t smell that great, but they sure were amazing to look at.

One day Mom went down to the herb garden and dug up a clump of those beautiful flowers. I was distressed to see her chopping off the lovely blossoms and tossing them aside only to carry home the dirty root as though it were treasure. Then I discovered those lovely purple and yellow flowers were Echinacea plants.

Whether you use Echinacea as a cure for strep throat, wounds, and infections, or just put a bouquet on the table in a vase, Echinacea is a necessary addition to your herb garden!

Botanical Name: Echinacea Purpurea

Also known as Purple Coneflower, and Snakeroot.

Echinacea is a genus of nine species of flowering plants all native to eastern North America. These are drought-tolerant perennial plants which can grow up to six feet tall! The most common types are Echinacea Purpurea and Echinacea Angustifolia. The nine species of Echinacea are:

- Echinacea angustifolia - Narrow-leaf Coneflower
- Echinacea atrorubens - Topeka Purple Coneflower
- Echinacea laevigata - Smooth Coneflower, Smooth Purple Coneflower
- Echinacea pallida - Pale Purple Coneflower
- Echinacea paradoxa - Yellow Coneflower, Bush’s Purple Coneflower
- Echinacea purpurea - Purple Coneflower, Eastern Purple Coneflower
- Echinacea sanguinea - Sanguin Purple Coneflower
- Echinacea simulata - Wavyleaf Purple Coneflower
- Echinacea tennesseensis - Tennessee Coneflower



Interesting Facts!

The Plains Indians used various species of Echinacea to treat poisonous insect and snake bites, toothaches, sore throat, wounds, as well as mumps, smallpox, and measles. The new American settlers quickly adopted the therapeutic use of the plant, and since that time it has become one of the top selling herbs in the United States. Echinacea is the best known and researched herb for stimulating the immune system. This native American herb has an impressive record of laboratory and clinical research. Thousands of doctors currently use Echinacea for treating infectious diseases.



Echinacea is Made of:

The constituents of Echinacea include essential oil, polysaccharides, polyacetylenes, betain, glycoside, sesquiterpenes and caryophyllene. It also contains copper, iron, tannins, protein, fatty acids and vitamins A, C, and E.

What Echinacea Can Do:

Echinacea prevents the formation of an enzyme which destroys a natural barrier between healthy tissue and damaging organisms. Echinacea is considered an effective treatment against the following conditions:

- Upper respiratory infections
- Common cold and sinusitis
- Staph and strep infections
- Influenza (flu)
- Herpes, an inflammation of the skin and mouth
- Many skin conditions: burns, insect bites, ulcers, psoriasis, acne and eczema
- Lymph glands, sore throat



How to Grow it:

Care: Plant seeds in full sun, or light shade in hotter climates. Echinacea can grow in fairly poor and dry soil, but I've found it difficult to start this plant from seed. Instead, I recommend buying plants from Brecks.com. These plants are high quality and guaranteed to grow! Harvest the roots in the spring or fall. Wash and chop the clean roots before you dry them. The roots can be used immediately, or dried for later use. I put washed, dried roots in a gallon jar with a lid for later use. Powdered Echinacea root can be purchased at bulkherbstore.com

How to Use Echinacea:

Echinacea root is the part which has been used historically in European and American herbalism. Today, nearly all parts of the plant are used, including the root, leaves, flowers, and seeds. Echinacea is available commercially in a number of forms: dried root or herb, liquid extract, powder, capsules and tablets, and creams and gels. It is often used in combination with goldenseal or vitamin C.

Strep Throat: The direct contact of an Echinacea tincture against the back of the throat is a common anecdotal remedy for cases of strep throat. Echinacea actively stimulates saliva and numbs the tissue it comes in contact with. Take 30 drops of Echinacea tincture, mix with saliva in mouth, and hold/gargle against sore throat. Repeat as often as desired, and no less than once each hour until symptoms cease. Higher quality Echinacea will numb the pain at the back of your throat and give a "tingly" feeling on the tongue. This is a good way to test the quality of an Echinacea tincture.

Cold and Flu: Echinacea should be used at the very early onset of a cold or flu. It is at this point that Echinacea is most effective, however, it must be taken in large doses and at frequent intervals. In my experience, taking Echinacea in small, erratic doses will do nothing for you. So if you are going to use Echinacea, use it aggressively! Take 30 drops of tincture each hour until symptoms cease.

External Wounds, Bites, Stings: Because of Echinacea's capacity to correct tissue

Warnings:

Echinacea has an excellent safety record and is very well tolerated by most people. There is no known toxicity. With long-term use, Echinacea appears to lose effectiveness.

abnormality, and it's anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and cell normalizing actions, a dried Echinacea powder sprinkled on open wounds is truly amazing in healing and restoration. A tea-wash is also effective.

Steep cut root in hot water for 30 minutes, strain, and use as a wash. Apply the powder or wash on open wounds and stings or bites. If you are in a hurry, simply add a half cup of warm water to 30 drops of tincture, and use this mixture as a wash for wounds.

Echinacea Tincture can be purchased at your local health food/ herb store. I prefer the NOW Foods Echinacea tincture, and most health food stores sell the NOW brand. Cut and dried Echinacea root can be purchased at bulkherbstore.com. Tincture recipes, how-to instructions for making powders, washes, and more are listed in my favorite herbal book: ***Herbal Antibiotics*** by Stephen Harrod Buhner. This book is available at bulkherbstore.com, along with many other herbs and resources.

Echinacea Quiz:

What are the two most common types of Echinacea? 1) _____ 2) _____

Echinacea is also called _____

Where did Echinacea originate? _____

How did the Native Americans use Echinacea? _____

List three illnesses/conditions that Echinacea can treat: 1) _____ 2) _____

3) _____

Should Echinacea be used long term? _____

What is the most effective way to use Echinacea in treating strep throat? _____

Write a short story of how the herb Echinacea could be useful in your family. _____
