

Description

Feverfew Chrysanthemum Parthenium Family: Asteraceae

Feverfew is a low-growing perennial, reaching up to 50cm tall, with bright green, soft and lightly hairy, pinnate leaves, similar to Italian Parsley. It also produces a small flower with a yellow centre and white petals. The plant has a distinct bitter-sweet smell with some medicinal value.

Growing Tips

It grows in any well-drained soil with full sun. For best results grow 45cm apart. Feverfew will die down in winter but re-grows in spring. It can be propagated by root division in autumn; it is drought resistant and easy-maintenance once established, but can be invasive.

Parts Used

Leaves.

Uses

The young leaves can be used in salads but are very bitter. The most popular use is as borders in the garden and medicinally, where they are used at the onset of a migraine, to reduce fevers (hence the name) and head colds, as well as arthritis.

Some people use Feverfew for its relaxing and sleep-promoting qualities. This can be applied by steeping a few fresh leaves in a cup of hot water for five minutes, leaving it covered. Use no longer than four weeks at a time. Fresh leaves eaten raw (a popular migraine preventative) may cause mouth ulcers in some people.

Origin & History

Feverfew originates in the Balkan and Caucasus region in Eastern Europe and has been naturalised in many parts of the world, including America, England and New Zealand. Herbalists prescribed it for vertigo and headaches and head colds. In the 18th century it was used to re-build the body after over-use of opium.