

***Chrysanthemum morifolium* Ramat.**

Asteraceae

Source of: jú huā 菊花

Chrysanthemum flower



Summary Description

The flower is an icon of Chinese art; hundreds of cultivars were developed for ornament, cuisine and medicine. *Chrysanthemum indicum* L. is thought to be the parent species of the ornamentals; that is the binomial listed for yě jú huā 野菊花, “wild chrysanthemum flower,” a different medicinal herb listed on page 166 in Bensky. As stated in *Flora of China*, the species name *C. morifolium* remains uncertain. A few cultivars appropriate for jú huā , a food-grade medicine, exist in North America. The plant is a full sun herbaceous perennial hardy to Zone 6 or 7, depending on the cultivar. Preferred cultivars are semi-evergreen with a basal leaf cluster that is tinged red in autumn. Strong branched stems rise to 4 feet in summer, with yellow or white flowers in late summer or autumn.

Propagation

The plant is propagated only from stem cuttings of an accepted cultivar. Cuttings made in late autumn can be refrigerated for a few months, then started no later than February for spring planting. Mark stem pieces to indicate upper and lower ends, strip lower portion to expose leaf nodes. Insert lower end into a rooting medium (half clean sand, half perlite is one option) or light potting soil. Keep the tray moist, well-drained, and in bright indirect light. The cuttings will begin to root immediately.

Cultivation

Plant well-rooted starts at a one-foot radius in a full sun, well-drained location after the soil has warmed in spring. Hoop house cultivation is an option in colder zones. Cut back stems by half after they are three feet tall. Pruning enhances branching and flower production.

Harvest & Processing

Pick flowers (no stem or leaf) as they open; an older flower will fall apart in the drying process. Dry in one layer with plenty of airflow and low heat; a dehydrator without extra heat is the best option. Be very careful not to overdry; properly dried flowers will remain intact and somewhat soft.

References

Flora of China: http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=2&taxon_id=106957

Bensky *Materia Medica* page: 58

Alternate species

As described above, this plant has many names and synonyms. For commercial purposes the names are irrelevant as the cultivar must be market-tested and approved to be a candidate for production.



Sample harvest in late October, plants not pruned



Clumps emerging in March, with uncut stems from previous season