

Echinacea Angustifolia

The favourite herb of the Native American Redskins

Origin

This perennial grows spontaneously in the prairies of eastern and central North America and in particular in New Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana .

History

Echinacea angustifolia was widely used by the North American Plains Indians for its general medicinal qualities, especially to treat the symptoms of cold: The Kiowa used it for coughs and sore throats, the Cheyenne for sore throats, the Pawnee for headaches, and many tribes including the Lakotah used it as an analgesic. ¹

In the 18th century Echinacea was an herb favoured by the American Eclectic school² of herbalists and was intimately associated with them. In the 1850's, the "Eclectics" were involved in one of the greatest herbal medicine movements the modern world has known up to that time. Eclectic herbal medicine integrated Native American herbs, and the Western scientific knowledge of the day. They independently evolved a system of health and medicine that was astonishingly similar to the medical systems in China and India.

Information about the use of the plant from traditional healers ranges from external application for wounds, burns and insect bites to the chewing of roots for toothache and throat infections, and internal application for pain, coughs, stomach cramps and snake bites.

The interest of white settlers was also drawn to this medicinal plant. The first Echinacea preparation, known as Meyers Blood Purifier, arrived on the market around 1880, with rheumatism, neuralgia and rattlesnake bites as indications.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Echinacea was the most frequently used plant preparation in the USA. Commercial cultivation was started in Germany around 1939.

Chemists and pharmacologists became interested in Echinacea and many constituents are now known, such as polysaccharides, echinacoside, cichoric acid, ketoalkenes and alkylamides. The extracts exhibit



¹ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Echinacea>

² *Eclectic medicine* was a branch of American medicine which made use of botanical remedies along with other substances and physical therapy practices, popular in the latter half of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries.

immunostimulant properties and are mainly used in the prophylaxis and therapy of colds, flu and septic complaints. 3

Description

The plants grow 40 to 70 centimetres tall with spindle-shaped taproots that are often branched. The stems and leaves are moderately to densely hairy. It belongs to the family of Asteraceae and is also called “Purple Coneflower”. Nowadays it’s considered one of the most important western herbal remedies and largely employed both in homeopathic and naturopathic medicine.

Astrological classification

Echinacea seems to have been unknown both to Culpeper and to Lilly which is easily explained considering its origins from the New World and the fact that informations about its healing properties started to be known out of the U.S only in the 18th Century.

The flower of the most powerful species of Echinacea is purple. Lilly gives the dominion for purple to Jupiter (Christian Astrology (C.A.), p. 63).

The plant grows in warm places which should not be too hot and requires much water as suggested by the temperately hot and moist planet it is ruled by (C.A.p. 62).



Echinacea develops long taproots which help it to survive also in difficult climatic conditions, it’s thus able to overcome very hot summers (with no or few flowers) or cold winters. It “dies” in late autumn and put forth in the spring. Since Jupiter is (temperately)hot, this flower is resisting to sun heat. But since its ruler s also moist, it needs moisture to give its best. The long taproots protect the plant against cold, contrary to its nature.

Every part of Echinacea is used for medical purpose but especially the flowers and the roots.

Echinacea is given for detoxification, a task of the liver, and the stimulation of the immunity system. Jupiter rules the liver (CA. p. 63), which is said to be the seat of Jupiter in the body.

Responsible for the immunity system are especially the white blood cells (Leucocytes) , produced in the bone marrow. The bones are ruled by Saturn (C.A. 246). The liver is responsible for immunological effects- and thus the reticuloendothelial system of the liver contains many immunologically active cells.

Many studies have been made to prove the scientific foundations of Echinacea stimulating the production of white blood cells.

³ <http://content.karger.com/ProdukteDB/produkte.asp?Doi=71678>

Astrologically, blood in its complexity is ruled by Jupiter (C.A.246).⁴ Blood is constituted mainly by two components, the white blood cells (leucocytes) and the red blood cells (erythrocytes). The red blood cells bring oxygen in the bodily tissues.

The air is stocked in the lungs which are ruled by Jupiter (C.A. p. 247) , so Jupiter rules the lungs as an organ and their absorbing quality, the air. In the humoral therapy, air is associated, according to Hippocrates and Galen, with sanguine temperament, ruled by Jupiter .Erythrocytes are produced in the liver, which is consequently ruled by Jupiter (C.A. p. 63).

Echinacea is given both for detoxification of the liver (in the waning phase of the Moon) and for reconstitution (in the waxing Moon-phase), for example the production of new blood cells (erythrocytes and leucocytes).

The plant also helps in diseases coming from cold (such as coughs) and cures lung-problems as an expectorate remedial. Jupiter's sanguine quality is opposed to phlegm, which causes mucus. This is why his calefactive and moistening properties cure diseases coming from cold by antipathy, as Culpeper calls it. ⁵

As it seems, modern naturopathy and homeopathy are right attributing to this plant such a great importance as it is experimenting in the last 20 years.

⁴ Since leucocytes are part of the main components of the blood, traditionally given to Jupiter and produced in the bone marrow, I would associated the bone marrow itself with Jupiter, since its function has nothing to do with stability and structure (bones) given to Saturn.

⁵ Nicholas Culpeper *Astrological Judgement of Diseases from the Decumbiture of the Sick*, edition Astrology Classics Medical Series, p.36, 78