

Oxeye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*

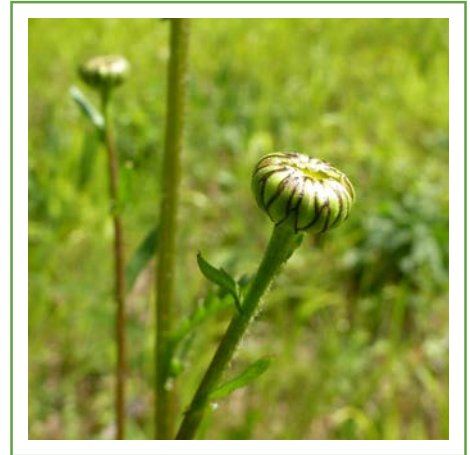
What's in a name?

The Oxeye Daisy was originally dedicated to Diana, the goddess of the moon and this plant was also known as 'moon daisy' or 'Moonpenny'. Early Christians dedicated the plant to Mary Magdalen and later it became known as 'maudlinwort'. In ancient Greek, *Leucanthemum* means 'white flower'.

Botany & Ecology

This plant is a perennial and it flowers between May and July. It spreads aggressively, colonising large areas of open space via the seeds (over 1,300 per flower) and by its rhizome or creeping root system. The seeds can stay dormant in the soil for up to 39 years and they will start to grow again when the soil is disturbed as for instance, during grazing activities, gardening or scrub clearance of once open space.

This plant is usually seen as a weed to most farmers; cows and pigs avoid it but it is palatable to goats and sheep. Oxeye daisies are known to be the most important plants for pollinators in the UK, particularly for the solitary bees like the bumblebee and the mason bee.



Folklore

The medieval Scots called the flowers "gools". The farmer with the most gools in their wheat field apparently had to pay an extra tax. The plant was also crushed to produce an acrid smelling sap which was used to repel fleas.

Folk Medicine

The Oxeye Daisy is mildly aromatic, like its close cousin, Chamomile. The young leaves and flowers were used to make tea, for relaxing the bronchials after a bad cold or an attack of asthma. This tea was also used as a diuretic and as a cure for stomach ulcers and bloody piles or bloody urine.

During the 16th and 17th century, the plant was crushed and made into an ointment, which was then applied to wounds. The juice was used to be infused in beer and consumed as a remedy for jaundice.



*Please note, readers should take advice from a qualified doctor or herbalist before using plants as a cure for ailments.