

Common Name	Yarrow
Family	Asteraceae or Compositae
Synonyms	A. lanulosa.
Known Hazards	Extended use of this plant, either medicinally or in the diet, can cause allergic skin rashes or lead to photosensitivity in some people[21, 238].
Habitats	Meadows, pastures, lawns etc. on all but the poorest soils[17].
Range	Europe, including Britain, north to 71°, and east to western Asia.
Edibility Rating	could be grown as standard crops
Medicinal Rating	very useful plants
Care	



Summary

Physical Characteristics

PERENNIAL growing to 0.6 m (2ft) by 0.6 m (2ft in). It is hardy to zone 2 and is not frost tender. It is in flower from Jun to August, and the seeds ripen from Jul to September. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Insects. It is noted for attracting wildlife.

The plant prefers light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils, requires well-drained soil and can grow in nutritionally poor soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils, and can grow in very alkaline soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It requires dry or moist soil and can tolerate drought. The plant can tolerate maritime exposure

Habitats

Ground Cover; Lawn; Meadow;

Edible Uses

Edible Parts: Condiment; Leaves; Tea.

Leaves - raw or cooked[4, 5, 46, 52]. A rather bitter flavour, they make an acceptable addition to mixed salads and are best used when young[9, 183, K]. The leaves are also used as a hop-substitute for flavouring and as a preservative for beer etc[2, 9, 53, 183]. Although in general yarrow is a very nutritious and beneficial plant to add to the diet, some caution should be exercised[K]. See the notes above on possible toxicity. An aromatic tea is made from the flowers and leaves[183]. An essential oil from the flowering heads is used as a flavouring for soft drinks[183].

Medicinal Uses

Plants For A Future can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally.

Antiinflammatory; Antiseptic; Antispasmodic; Aromatic; Astringent; Carminative; Cholagogue; Diaphoretic; Digestive; Emmenagogue; Odontalgic; Stimulant; Tonic; Vasodilator; Vulnerary.

Yarrow has a high reputation and is widely employed in herbal medicine, administered both internally and externally. It is used in the treatment of a very wide range of disorders but is particularly valuable for treating wounds, stopping the flow of blood, treating colds, fevers, kidney diseases, menstrual pain etc[218, 238, 254, 257]. The whole plant is used, both fresh and dried, and is best harvested when in flower[222]. Some caution should be exercised in the use of this herb since large or frequent doses taken over a long period may be potentially harmful[222], causing allergic rashes and making the skin more sensitive to sunlight[238]. The herb combines well with *Sambucus nigra* flowers (Elder) and *Mentha x piperita vulgaris* (Peppermint) for treating colds and influenza[268]. The herb is antiseptic, antispasmodic, mildly aromatic, astringent, carminative, cholagogue, diaphoretic, digestive, emmenagogue, odontalgic, stimulant, bitter tonic, vasodilator and vulnerary[4, 9, 14, 21, 54, 145, 165, 172, 238, 240, 254]. It also contains the anti-inflammatory agent azulene, though the content of this varies even between plants in the same habitat[238]. The herb is harvested in the summer when in flower and can be dried for later use[4]. The fresh leaf can be applied direct to an aching tooth in order to relieve the pain[268].

Other Uses

Compost; Cosmetic; Dye; Essential; Ground cover; Hair; Liquid feed; Repellent.

The growing plant repels beetles, ants and flies[14, 99, 172]. The plant has been burnt in order to ward off mosquitoes[257]. A liquid plant feed can be made from the leaves[54]. You fill a container with the leaves and then add some water. Leave it to soak for a week or two and then dilute the rather smelly dark liquid, perhaps 10 - 1 with water though this figure is not crucial[K]. This plant is an essential ingredient of 'Quick Return' herbal compost activator[32]. This is a dried and powdered mixture of several herbs that can be added to a compost heap in order to speed up bacterial activity and thus shorten the time needed to make the compost[K]. The fragrant seeds have been used to impart a pleasant smell indoors[257]. An essential oil obtained from the leaves is used medicinally[17, 46, 61]. The leaves contain from 0.6 to 0.85% essential oil[240]. The leaves have been used as a cosmetic cleanser for greasy skin[268]. Yellow and green dyes are obtained from the flowers[168]. A good ground cover plant, spreading quickly by its roots[208].

Cultivation details

Succeeds in most soils and situations but prefers a well-drained soil in a sunny position[1, 14]. Shade tolerant[13]. Plants live longer when grown in a poor soil[200] and also do well on lime[208]. Established plants are very drought tolerant[200], they can show distress in very severe droughts but usually recover[190]. It remains green after grass has turned brown in a drought[187]. Plants succeed in maritime gardens[233]. The plant has a very spreading root system and is usually quite invasive[233, K]. A very hardy plant, tolerating temperatures down to about -25°C[187]. Yarrow is an excellent plant for growing in lawns, meadows, orchards etc., it is tolerant of repeated close cutting and of being walked on[20, 54]. It works to improve the soil fertility[20, 54]. A very good companion plant, it improves the health of plants growing nearby and enhances their essential oil content thus making them more resistant to insect predations[14, 18, 20, 53]. There are some named forms, selected for their ornamental value[183, 238]. 'Pink' (syn. 'Rosea') has very aromatic foliage and deep pink flowers[183]. Hybridizes freely with other members of this genus[200]. A good bee plant, it is an important nectar source for many insects[24].

Propagation

Seed - sow spring or early autumn in a cold frame[133]. The seed usually germinates in 1 - 3 months[133]. When large enough to handle, prick the seedlings out into individual pots and plant them out in the summer. Division in spring or autumn. Very easy, the divisions can be planted direct into their permanent positions. Divisions succeed at any time of the year. Basal cuttings of new shoots in spring. Very easy, collect the shoots when they are about 10cm tall, potting them up individually in pots and keeping them in a warm but lightly shaded position. They should root within 3 weeks and will be ready to plant out in the summer