

Sweet Violet, Violet

Family	Violaceae
Botanical	Viola odorata
Parts Used	Leaves and flowers
USDA Hardiness	4A - 9B
Light	Full Sun to Full Shade
Soil	Well Drained
Duration	Perennial



Propagation	Soil pH requirements: 6.6 to 7.5 (neutral). By dividing the rootball or from seed.
Water	As needed, do not overwater
Growing	Violets can be planted nearly anytime throughout spring and fall, though early spring is preferable. These plants enjoy light shade but will also thrive in sunny locations. While they tolerate many soil types, wild violets prefer soil that is moist, yet well-draining, and rich in organic matter.

Medicinal Uses	Expectorant, alterative, anti-inflammatory, diuretic and anti-neoplastic.
Benefits	A cough remedy especially for bronchitis. Used for skin conditions such as eczema and in a long term approach to rheumatism. May be used for urinary infections. An anti-cancer herb.
Preparation	Collect the leaves and flowers in mid-spring to late summer. Dry with care. Violet Leaf Infusion Recipe Pour 1 pint of boiling water over 2 1/2 ounces of fresh, clean leaves and allow the brew to steep overnight. Strain the liquid, which may then be drunk cold by the wineglass every 2 hours. To be effective, the infusion should be made fresh daily.

Fines Herbes

Culinary Uses

The flowers can be eaten in salads; crystallized as beautiful candies; added to vinegar to impart color and fragrance; made into a rare and delicate jelly; boiled, pressed, pounded, and mixed with milk, rice flour and sugar into a porridge; and even fermented to produce a sweet wine.

!!! IMPORTANT !!! African violets are NOT viola and are NOT considered edible. DO NOT SUBSTITUTE AFRICAN VIOLETS FOR SWEET VIOLETS IN THESE OR OTHER RECIPES. Beware also of look-alikes and sound-alikes, as many plants are nicknamed "violet" because of their color.



Historical Facts

The symbol of ancient Athens, the violet was believed to moderate anger, strengthen and comfort the heart, and promote refreshing sleep. Garlands of its blossoms worn around the heads of revelers were supposed to dispel wine fumes and prevent dizziness and headaches (chemical analysis of the plant reveals the presence of salicylic acid — the "raw material" for aspirin — and thus shows that the Greeks may have known whereof they spoke). The leaves, which have antiseptic properties, can be used in ointments or as poultices for bruises and, when made into a tea or syrup, have been taken for internal inflammations and coughs.

Additional Tips

Nutrition Facts

The late Euell Gibbons even referred to them as "nature's vitamin pill." A 1/2 cup serving of leaves can provide as much vitamin C as three oranges. Salicylic acid, volatile oil, mucilage, resin, sugar, an aromatic principle, flavonoids, a glucoside, saponins, an alkaloid called odoratine, rich in vitamins A and C. The flower also contains an aromatic compound called irone, and a blue pigment.