

Violet

Viola odorata
Violaceae, Violet family

They have long symbolized young love and springtime and are the flower of Aphrodite.

Virtually all of the 100 or more species of *Viola* are useful

Viola odorata is introduced; some other *Viola* species are native

The colorful flowers are not reproductive. The reproductive flowers are produced in the fall and are green and hidden in the foliage.

Identifying Characteristics:

Leaf shape/s: heart-shaped, with edges rolled in, especially on young leaves

Leaf pattern: basal

Stem characteristics: no stems

Flower: 5 sepals and 5 petals, with the lower petal being larger than the side and top petal pairs

Root: rhizome with a dense fibrous root system; multiple plants may arise from a single stalk; spreads from stolons

Known plant constituents: vitamin C, carotenes, saponins, antioxidants, essential oil, phytosterols, quercetin, salicylic acid, alkaloids, flavonoids

Parts of the plants used for food and/or medicine: Mostly leaves, but also flowers and roots (roots are toxic in large amounts).

Plant can be prepared as a salad green; long infusion; fresh or dried leaf poultice or compress; tincture; flowers can be candied or made into a syrup.

Actions: leaves are nutritive, alterative, dissolvent, anti-neoplastic, depurative, suppurative, mucilaginous, expectorant, demulcent, laxative, diuretic, anodyne, vulnerary, antiseptic, emollient. Flowers are nutritive, mildly laxative, expectorant, demulcent. Roots are antipyretic, diuretic, expectorant, emollient, emetic

Body system/s affected: digestive, nervous, respiratory, immune, reproductive, skin, urinary

Taste: bland, slightly sweet

Uses/Applications

Dissolves cysts, lumps, infections, growths, cancers, especially of the breasts and skin.

Eases headaches and nervous tension.

Soothes sore throats, bronchitis, coughs, and respiratory congestion.

Heals wounds, abscesses, burns.

Fresh leaves and flowers in salads.

Fresh leaves cooked as a potherb and in soup.

Fresh or dried leaves in a long infusion.

Strained leaves from infusions applied as a poultice.

Flowers steeped in vinegar.

Flowers steeped in boiling water, strained and made into a syrup with honey.

Root in a tincture or decoction, crushed and soaked in vinegar as a poultice.

Violet Syrup

yields 3 cups

½ lb. fresh violet blossoms
2 cups water
2 cups honey

Enlist all the help you can to pick violet blossoms; cover. Let steep overnight in nonmetallic container. Strain out flowers. Reserve purple liquid.

Alternate method for loners: pour 2 cups boiling water over as many flowers as you can get. Strain liquid. Reheat and pour over the next day's harvest. Do this daily until your liquid is pleasingly purple.

Combine liquid and honey. Simmer gently, stirring for ten or fifteen minutes, until it seems like syrup. Fill clean jars. Cool. Keep well chilled to preserve.

Creamy Violet Green Soup

2 Tbs. olive oil
1 cup sliced wild leeks
4 cups violet leaves
4 cups water
salt to taste
4 cups fresh milk

Sauté leeks in oil for three minutes. Add chopped violet leaves, stir for a minute. Add water and salt and bring to a simmer. Cook about fifteen minutes, then puree in blender or through a sieve. Reheat, adding milk. Garnish with a few violet blossoms and a dust of nutmeg before serving. Also nice cold.

Recipes (and most information) are from *Healing Wise* by Susun Weed.