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Cetraria islandica

ICELAND MOSS is a lichen. Native to the Arctic and to high northern latitudes, it has olive-brown or grey fronds resembling stag's horns.

It is also known as Cetraria, Dorset moss, *Erba rissa* (Italian), Eryngo-leaved liverwort, Icelandic moss, Iceland lichen, *Isländisches Moos* (German), *Islandslav* (Swedish), *Islanninjäkälä* (Finnish), Lichen, *Lichen d'Islande* (French), *Liquén d'Islandia* (Spanish), and *Mousse d'Islande* (French); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of health.

Warning – prolonged periods of intake or excessive doses can not only cause gastrointestinal and liver disorders, but also fainting.

Trade demands for iceland moss in Europe are such that it has been the subject of over harvesting, and at the end of the 1990s its future survival was considered to be threatened.

Islandica means 'of or from Iceland'.

Not only has this lichen (it is not a moss) been used as a food in northern countries but, according to authorities, mainly due to its highly nutritious value it is still valued in folk medicine.

Reindeer enjoy eating iceland moss.

Iceland moss is a commercial ingredient in disinfectants.

Medicinally, iceland moss has been used in the treatment of chest ailments, dysentery and digestive disorders. It has been found to be particularly useful during the treatment of diseases that weaken the patient through persistent vomiting, and has also been used on slow healing wounds. Today it seems to be especially popular as an ingredient in some commercial cough medicines and it is also used in homoeopathic treatments.