

Chrysanthemum

Compositae
[*Asteraceae*]

Chrysanthemum is derived from Greek *chyrsos* (golden) and *antho-* (flower) components.
Warning – the plants can cause dermatitis.

Chrysanthemum species were introduced to England from the Orient in the late 1700s, shortly after their first appearance in the Netherlands. Their reception was such that in the following century the National Chrysanthemum Society had been formed and was holding exhibitions of Chinese and Japanese cultivated varieties in the 1860s. Since that time many species once considered to be part of the genus *Chrysanthemum* have been placed in other genera. Not least of these are the flowers referred to by florists and familiar to non-gardeners as Chrysanthemums or Mums. These are now part of the genus *Dendranthema* still in the *Compositae* (*Asteraceae*) family. Thus today the Society's attentions are focused on *Dendranthema* not *Chrysanthemum*.

In China they were cultivated from at least 500 BC for their medicinal properties and were believed to be full of magical juices.

One story tells of people of Nanyang (central China) who lived to be 100 years old because their drinking water came from a stream with many chrysanthemums growing on its banks. The essence of the plants was thought to have seeped into the water and was continually revitalizing those who drank it.

The flowers were popular with the Chinese nobility, and today they are an emblem of rest and ease.

Chrysanthemum is believed to have reached Japan by the 4th Century AD. In a stylized form it became the Country's national flower and symbol (as well as the *mon* of her imperial family) and is actually taken from a species of the *Paulownia* family.

Certain species in the genus are cultivated in China for their edible petals.

This genus *Chrysanthemum* attracts importation restrictions across some international boundaries

In flower language this genus is said to be a symbol of dejection (yellow), 'I love you' (red), slighted love (yellow), and truth (white).

Chrysanthemums are the birthday flower for 24th December and are also associated with the month of November.