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Paeonia

Paeoniaceae

[*Ranunculaceae*]

Paeonia is the classical Greek name honouring Paeëon, physician to the gods, who is described by Homer the 8th Century BC Greek epic poet. However for some authorities this name is derived from Greek *paio* (I strike) and an incantation *iepaieon* that was used by physicians. A ‘paean’ was a hymn to Apollo or the Greek goddess Artemis (the huntress) and the word is still in use today with the meaning ‘exultation’.

All species are poisonous (particularly the flowers and seeds).

The state of Indiana in the United States has adopted the peony as an emblem.