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Paeonia lactiflora

[Synonyms : *Paeonia albiflora*, *Paeonia chinensis*, *Paeonia edulis*, *Paeonia fragrans*, *Paeonia japonica*, *Paeonia reevesiana*, *Paeonia sinensis*]

CHINESE PEONY is a perennial. Native to Tibet, China and Siberia, it has scented, pure white or pink flowers with yellow stamens.

It is also known as *Bai shao* (Chinese), *Chinesische Pfingstrose* (German), Common garden peony, Fragrant peony, *Luktpion* (Swedish), Paeony, *Pivonka* (Slovak), *Pivoňka čínská* (Czech), *Piwonia chińska* (Polish), *Shaoyao* (Chinese), White peony, and *Yama shakuyaku* (Japanese).

Warning – the plant is poisonous (particularly the flowers and seeds).

Lactiflora is derived from Latin *lacti-* (milk) and *-flora* (flowered) meaning ‘with milky flowers’.

It is understood that the Chinese peony is a parent of many of today’s cultivated peonies.

The roots are boiled and eaten as a vegetable in Mongolia. Ground seeds have also been added to tea as a flavouring.

In the United States in 1957 the Chinese peony was adopted as a state emblem by Indiana.

Medicinally, Chinese peony was once used from China to western Europe and today it is still employed in China for treating nervous disorders.