



***Chrysanthemum nankingense* Handel-Mazzetti – alimentary chrysanthemum**

In China, chrysanthemums are the favorite flowers, not only for their beauty and elegance, but also for their use in traditional medicine and for their nutritional value.

Chrysanthemum nankingense Handel-Mazzetti - syn. *Chrysanthemum indicum* L. var. *edule* Kitamura, *Dendranthema nankingense* (Handel-Mazzetti) X.D. Cui, became known for its use for culinary purposes, especially in the city of Nanjing, China. Native in China, this species is taxonomically placed in Asteraceae family, being a perennial plant, sub-shrub, with late blooming in the local condition of lași (October-November). Moreover it is used in isolated field groups or in different floral arrangements. In India, this species is frequently used in Hindi religious ceremonies named *Pooja* (Pūjā) when they are offered to certain gods, personalities or special guests. The term *puja* is derived by Sanskritization of the word *Poo sey* which refers to something “given, gifted or accompanied by flowers” meaning in a festive, esthetic way.

In the traditional medicine, *Chrysanthemum nankingense* (*Ju Hua Nao* or *Nanking chrysanthemum*) is often used in preparing teas or as it is used in the city of Nanjing (Nanking) in soups, cold appetizers, for preparing wines and liquors especially from petals. With therapeutic effect this species is used in detoxification, treating headaches, stomachaches, reducing fever and blood pressure, ophthalmologic and digestive problems. As several other Chinese traditional medicines, chrysanthemum tea doesn't have secondary effects and is very accessible, which makes it useful for elders in treating different common diseases.

The alimentary chrysanthemum is one of the most interesting Asian “greens”, being cultivated for its leaves and beautiful and delicate flowers. The young leaves are delicious in soups and salads and can be served with sesame oil, garlic and radish, boiled and prepared in the same way as spinach. The flowers are also eatable and are used in salads, pastry and jams.