

Common Name: **Hollyhock**

Genus: *Alcea*

Species: *rosea*

Family: Malvaceae

AKA: Holly Hock, Hollihocke, Garden Mallow, Hockes



Historical Uses:

Medical: “The decoction of the floures, especially those of the red, doth stop the overmuch flowing of the monthly courses, if they be boiled in red wine. The roots, leaves, and seeds serve for all those things for which the wild mallows do, which are more commonly and familiarly used.” (1)

Ornamental: “White, red and sometimes purple flowers. Name suggests it is found in gardens.” (2)

Culinary: Was eaten as a pot herb but not particularly palatable. (3)

Folklore/Astrology: “The hollihocke is meetely hot and also moist, but not so much as the wilde mallow.” (4)

Other: “Reached Europe in the 16th century. The name *Alcea* is from the Greek *alkaria*, “mallow”. In the

common name “holy hock” hoc comes from the Old English word for mallow. The hollyhock is a close relation to the marsh mallow.” (5)



Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Flowers. Flowers are picked when open and dried for infusions and syrups.

Medicinal: “A soothing herb that relieves irritation and soreness, and has diuretic effects. Internally used for gastritis, coughs and cystitis. Externally as a gargle for sore throats. Often combined with other herbs in cough syrups.” (6)

Culinary: “Young leaves are edible. Petals and cooked flower buds can be added to salads. Petals can be used for tea.” (7)

Cautions: “Rust may damage the foliage. Leaves may be damaged by plant bugs and caterpillars.” (8)

Area of Origin: Mediterranean region to central Asia

Physical description: Tall perennial or biennial with rounded, lobed leaves. Stalk will bear many single or double flowers.

Plant type: Biennial

Height: 4-8ft.

Flower color: Varies: white, pink, purple, pale yellow.

Flowering period: Summer

Soil type/requirements: Well-drained soil

Hardiness zone: USDA 3-9

Sun requirements: Full sun

Propagation: By seed sown *in situ* in spring or late summer

Bibliography

1. Gerard, p. 928-929
2. Ibid
3. Grieve, p. 409
4. Gerard, p. 928-929
5. Bown, p. 109-110
6. Ibid
7. Ibid
8. Ibid

Illustrations:

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| 1. Fuchs Herbal | 1543 |
| 2. PSUMG | 2005 |