

ROSE, COTTON



Hibiscus mutabilis

[hi-BIS-kus mew-TAB-ill-iss]

Family: Malvaceae

Names: Chinese rose, confederate rose; mu fu rong hua; mu fu rong, Changeable rose mallow; Shoublak (Creole); Papo, Palo de la reina, Pejo, Tap; Botan, Changing Rose, Chiu K'Uei, Dixie Rosemallow, Fu Rong Ye, Mu Fu Jung, Mu Fu Jung Yeh, Ti Fu Jung, Waru Landak,

Description: The confederate rose is a large shrub or small multistemmed tree that grows to 15 ft high with about a 10 ft spread. The large leaves are 5 - 7 in, bright green, hairy on the undersides and deeply lobed. In full bloom starting in late summer and on into fall. The flowers open pure white and change color over a three-day period until they are deep pink and then as they die assume a dark "blue-pink" hue. The most notable characteristic is that flowers of three distinct colors appear on the bush simultaneously as the blooms color cycle

independent of one another. Single and double flowered varieties are available, both having quite large blossoms that are 3-5 in (8 - 13 cm) across. After flowering a round, hairy capsule forms which dries and releases fuzzy seeds, a trait that inspired one of the plants common names, rose cotton as the buds resemble the boll of cotton.

Cultivation: Prefers a well-drained humus rich fertile soil in full sun. Prefers a warm but wet winter. The plant can probably be grown outdoors in the mildest areas of the country especially if given a good mulch in the winter. It is widely cultivated in tropical and occasionally in temperate areas as an ornamental plant, there are many named varieties. Sow seed early spring in a warm greenhouse. Germination is usually fairly rapid. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle. If growing them as annuals, plant them out into their permanent positions in early summer and protect them with a frame or cloche until they are growing away well. If hoping to grow them as perennials, then it is better to grow them on in the greenhouse for their first year and to plant them out in early summer of the following year. Cuttings of half-ripe wood, July/August in a frame. Overwinter them in a warm greenhouse and plant out after the last expected frosts.

Properties: Antiphlogistic; Demulcent; Depurative; Expectorant; Febrifuge.

Constituents: Flowers contain isoquercitrin, hyperoside, rutin, quercetin-4-glucoside, quercimeritrin and quercetin. The red dye consists of cyaniding, cyaniding-3-sambubioside, and cyanidin-3,5-diglucoside.

Medicinal Uses: While the roots and leaves of this deciduous bush have medicinal uses, it is the flowers that are used most commonly. Acrid in flavor and neutral in nature, if used internally, it can remove heat from the blood, reduce swelling and detoxify. If pounded and applied externally, it relieves inflammation and reduces swelling. The flower's nutritional properties are purported to be good for menopausal women. It balances hormones, and purifies your blood. The roots and leaves, ground into paste, is good for treating diabetics with leg problems. The abundant mucilage contained in the tissues makes the plant an effective emollient for burns. Leaves and flowers kill pain; expel phlegm; treat excessive bleeding during menstruation, painful urination, inflammation and snake bites. A decoction of the flowers is used in the treatment of lung ailments.

Culinary Uses: Leaves and the fibrous root, little flavor but mucilaginous.

Other Uses: A fiber from the bark is used for making rope.

References:

An Illustrated Dictionary of Chinese Medicinal Herbs, Wee Yeow Chin & Hsuan Keng, CRCS Publications; 1992; ISBN: 0-916360-53-9
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