

ANOTHER  
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FACT SHEET

SPECIAL INTEREST HERBS

# ECHINACEA

Hardy Perennial  
Echinacea purpurea Purple Coneflower  
Family: Asteraceae



## HISTORY

Echinacea has been used for centuries by Native American Indians. The roots contain a substance called caffeic acid glycoside, which reacts with the cells in the body and facilitates the healing of wounds. The American Indians discovered that this 'miracle substance' could be used to treat septicaemia, various wounds, as well as insect and snakebites.

## DESCRIPTION

A wonderful upright perennial, native to North American plains, Echinacea purpurea bears striking purple-red daisy like flowers in summer and autumn, high above lush green foliage. The petals or florets are arranged around a spiky orangey brown cone-shaped centre, hence the name coneflower. Height approx 1.2 m (4 ft.)



The name Echinacea comes from the Greek word echinos, which means hedgehog, this of course, refers to the distinct central cone.

## USES

It has more recently become known for its medicinal attributes as an anti-biotic, providing relief against cold and

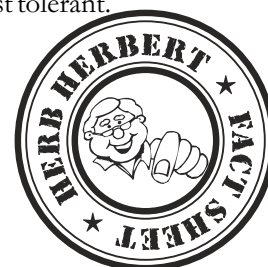
flu symptoms and for its effect on the body's immune system.

Echinacea is said to strengthen the body's tissue against attacking micro-organisms as well as neutralizing acid conditions in the blood characteristic of lymphatic stagnation. Dr Paul Lee, founder of the Platonic Academy of Herbal Studies, describes Echinacea as "our leading herb on the list of immuno-stimulants. As a result, this herb is undergoing serious investigation by researchers as a means of combatting the AIDS virus.

The stunning flower display that Echinacea purpurea provides, make this an excellent addition to the perennial border. They also make excellent cut flowers.

## CULTIVATION

Echinacea purpurea grows in full sun to light shade in a rich well drained soil, though once established, they are tolerant of a wide array of conditions in particular, hot dry conditions of summer. They are also frost tolerant.



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