Chamomile \textit{(Matricaria recutita)}

\textbf{Parts used and where grown:} Chamomile, a member of the daisy family, is native to Europe and western Asia. German chamomile is the most commonly used. The dried and fresh flowers are used medicinally.

\textbf{Historical or traditional use} (may or may not be supported by scientific studies): Chamomile has been used for centuries as a medicinal plant, mostly for gastrointestinal complaints. This practice continues today.

\textbf{Active constituents:} The flowers of chamomile provide 1–2\% volatile oils containing alpha-bisabolol, alpha-bisabolol oxides A & B, and matricin (usually converted to chamazulene). Other active constituents include the bioflavonoids apigenin, luteolin, and quercetin.\textsuperscript{1} These active ingredients contribute to chamomile’s anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, and smooth-muscle relaxing action, particularly in the gastrointestinal tract.\textsuperscript{2 3 4 5}

\textbf{How much is usually taken?} Chamomile is often taken as a tea that can be drunk three to four times daily between meals.\textsuperscript{6} Common alternatives are to use 2–3 grams of the herb in tablet or capsule form or 4–6 ml of tincture three times per day between meals.
Are there any side effects or interactions? Though rare, allergic reactions to chamomile have been reported.7 These reactions have included bronchial constriction with internal use and allergic skin reactions with topical use. While such side effects are extremely uncommon, persons with allergies to plants of the Asteraceae family (ragweed, aster, and chrysanthemums) should avoid using chamomile. Chamomile is not contraindicated during pregnancy or lactation.

References: