

38540 Mallow Blossoms

synonym.: hollyhock flowers

german: Malvenblüten, Stockmalve, Stockrose, Roter Eibisch, Gartenpappelblüten

frz.: fleurs de mauve

The black mallow *Althaea rosea* or *Alcea rosea* of the Malvaceae family must not be confused with the wild mallow *Malva silvestris* which does not have black-brown flowers but instead blue red flowers. *Althaea rosea* originates from China and reached Europe over Syria. It is an herbaceous plant which can get up to six years old, but often it is only an annual flower. It can occur that one single plant produces over one thousand flowers which weigh about one pound when dried. The harvested flowers can be weathered without additional heat; those dried in the shade contain more dye than when dried in the sun. The flowers have to be well protected against humidity since they can mold very easily. Under ideal conditions, however, these can be stored over many years without losing its coloring ability. During the past decade Germany was the most important supplier of the mallow flowers. They were mostly cultured near Nuremberg and were exported to France and England. Another important growing area is in Turkey.

Mallow contains of following phytochemicals: Malvin (Malvidin-3,5-glucoside) and Myrtillin (different Delphinidine-3-glycosides). Common mallow has been used traditionally to treat cough and as a demulcent. The flowers can also be used for its coloring properties, the best on mordanted fibers.

The preparation of an alcohol extract of the mallow flowers is better than an aqueous extract. After the alcohol has been evaporated, the residual dye can then be dissolved with water. The colors of the textiles dyed with these extracts are much clearer. Wool, silk, cotton and linen can all be dyed with mallow flowers. Different blue-violet hues are reached with different mordants: tin and aluminium salts give a blue-violet hue on cotton, and iron salts a black-blue or even a black hue. The same colors are reached on linen. Antimony salts give brown-violet hues. Wool and silk are dyed with tin salts giving a violet hue, with iron salts a blue-black hue and with aluna a grey or violet-blue hue.

Before it was reached to dye textiles, the mallow flower dye was used to color wine dark.