

western America, goddess of innocence and purity) looking down from heaven, veils. Asters were sacred to all the gods and goddesses and beautiful wreaths made from the flowers were placed on temple doors on very important festive occasions. Known in France as "eye of Christ" and in Germany as starworts, asters were often burned to keep away evil spirits. A hedgehog of asters was thought to cure the bite of a mad dog. Romans used the plant to clear their complexion and ancient Greeks used it as an antidote for scorpionstings and to drive away snakes. They believed that boiling aster leaves in wine and placing them close to a fire of bees would impress the honey. Native Americans found many uses for asters, from treating skin rashes and sores to stomach pain and rheumatoid fever. Fama medicinal and curative for many were made from some asters and others were eaten as food. Some were smoked in pipes as a charm to attract game, especially deer. Today there are no medical uses for asters.



The genus Aster has recently undergone a name change due to close study using DNA testing and other techniques. There are about 100 flowering plants in North America traditionally placed in the aster genus. About 50 of them are considered common and wide-spread. Now there is only one species left with the name Aster. The other species have been given several unique (new) names. For the botanists, renaming of the aster brought accuracy and order. For the layperson, it