

## Dried rose petals: From the kitchen to the boudoir

**Rose is a universally acknowledged and admired flower. The extortionate price, high perishability, unavailability round the year and ephemeral nature of fresh cut roses eventually abashing passionate rose lovers. So to keep this favourite flower around all year long, drying is the most exercised and exemplary approach. Not only dehydrated rose, anyone can also experience the worthwhile consequences of desiccated rose petals. Dried rose petals in particular can be transformed into many wonderful things. On top of all that, the process of drying them is actually quite simple. They provide an intoxicating fragrance to potpourri and satin sachets, add colour to indoor decorations and create romantic confetti for weddings. Although the spectacular sight and heavenly scent of the flowers do not last long and soon give way to the red coloured rose hips but it is hard not to love a rose. So to preserve its show-stopping aroma and protean utilities, dried rose petals are the pre-eminent recourse.**

### How to desiccate fresh rose petals?

Literally very fundamental procedures are elected to dry rose petals but prior to subjecting them into drying, harvesting of petals at appropriate stage is mandatory. Gathering of petals should be undertaken from fresh roses when they are at their biggest and brightest as well as also smell their best. Mid morning of a dry day-when the dew has evaporated and there's been no rain for at least the past two-days is the ideal time to assemble them. Browning petals or hydrated petals should be circumvented to pick, as during drying either they will turn fully brown or begin to rot. Roses ready to release their petals will fall easily into hands by a gentle tugging while the center of the flower will remain intact to produce the rose hip soon after. Petals can also be emancipated from the stems by using scissors to snip around the base of the rose petals. Petals resist to liberate easily and should not be forced since it may result in the pulling off of entire flower. Paper bag or wooden baskets for their aptness are most suitable to store them. There are several modus-operandi of drying of rose petals among which air drying, microwave drying, drying by dehydrator and book drying are few. The best place to keep a drying sheet containing petals in a single layer, is on a flat surface away from direct sunlight and having good air circulation. It should be followed by turning them over at least once a day to ensure air exposure of both sides of each petal. After a couple of days stock of crispy petals can be achieved after removing from drying sheet. In microwave drying method, petals are arranged in a single layer without any overlapping petals on a microwave safe plate lined with a double layer of paper towels followed by drying for

approximately 40 sec and storing. Dehydrator is also a good medium to dehydrate rose petals within few hours at the lowest possible setting. Laying of petals inside a book followed by waiting for about a week or two for complete drying is another customary technique. Merits of successfully dried rose petals can only be experienced by bona fide aftercare, which involves the storing in tightly sealed storage containers to prevent insects from entering and eating the petals.

### Multitudinous feasibility of dried rose flowers

Dried flowers of rose are full of subtle colours and myriad textures. It will not be a big surprise to discover dried rose petals as a kitchen ingredient as cooking with rose petals dates back to centuries. All roses are edible, but some taste better than others, and some should be avoided. Roses from the florist shop should not be consumed as insecticides and fungicides are utilized for their growing. Roses that have pleasing fragrance especially pink, yellow and white blooms should be preferred for food purpose. Anyone can savor the amalgamation of various hues of dried petals having different tastes being strewed on toasts. White petals make a nice contrast against the brown of nut butter while dark damask coloured roses lend their perfume to the air before taking a bite. Dried rose petals are more practical in terms of shelf-life and storage, and have long been used to bring floral notes to sugars and spice mixes like 'rasel hanout'. Another most prevalent sweet preserve of rose petals made in India and in some other Asian countries is 'Gulkand' where 'Gul' means flower in both Persian and Urdu languages, and 'qand' means sweet in Arabic. It is made by using 1 cup



Air dried loose red rose petals



Hand-made floral craft using red dried rose petals



Freshly harvested rose petals before drying

of scented dried petals of *Rosa x damascena* and 3 cups of sugar. Infusion is another common way of cooking with rose petals. This might be a simple rose petal tea, a sugar-water infusion for a flavoured cocktail syrup, or a more complex infusion for custard, gelatine or opaline. Edible dried rose petals are delicious for desserts like almond sponges or semolina puddings collaterally their flavours can be also incorporated in some western dishes like Turkish delight cheesecake for inspiration. Rose petals occasionally appear in Indian dishes too like Hyderabadi Biryani where dash of rose water is added. They have immense entail for many savoury and meat dishes in Mexican and Mediterranean cooking. They are most usual ingredient in kulfi or sweetened rice dishes. In the context of British cooking, clean flavours like cucumber or apple pair well with rose petals. Red, light pink, dark pink, white, yellow, orange, mauve or blue petals also make a stunning contrast against the greens in a salad. Thus, besides their uses for their aromas, floral flavours, symbolism or decorativeness, they are a beautiful addition to the chef's arsenal.

Multitudinous health benefits can be procured by this flower since fresh as well as dried rose petals contain vitamin C, citric acids, pectin and more than 300 medicinally essential chemical constituents of which only about 100 have been identified. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. Pliny first recorded 32 different uses of roses. Distinctively *Rosa gallica* var. *centifolia* or Cabbage rose is quite popular for its various medicinal properties. It is familiar for its astringent and anti-inflammatory properties and also for aphrodisiac, sedative and antidepressant qualities. French rose oil gained reputation as aphrodisiac concocted using cabbage rose petals significantly different by its chemical composition from Bulgarian rose oil. Few natural home remedies formulated from dried rose petals fight against the infection in the digestive tracts and intestines, hasten the elimination of wastes through kidneys and also aid to clean the gall bladder, liver and promote the bile flow. Rose petals are antiviral, antibacterial and antiseptic, so the application of them over a minute wound can act as a protective covering. A decoction prepared by boiling rose petals in water is effective home remedy against sore throat. Rose tea using especially the petals of wild roses

(*Rosa acicularis*) also assists to curb diarrhea since roses are astringent. Depending on the source, it has found that per cup of rose tea is able to supply as much as 1,000 mg vitamin C, changes vitamins into pro-oxidant that actually decrease cellular damage caused by unstable free radicals. Similarly, rose oil is quite fruitful for stress related conditions like insomnia, nervous tension and also for skin diseases including rosecea and eczema owing to its emollient, healing and soothing properties. Rose tea makes an excellent emmenagogue to help move blood and quell cramps during menstruation while rose water makes a good eye wash for sore or inflamed eyes. So, wide range of roses namely *R. canina* (Dog rose), *R. arkansana* (Meadow rose), *R. laevigata* (Cherokee rose), *R. damascena* (Damask rose), *R. rugosa* (Rugosa rose) and *R. multiflora* (Japanese rose) can be easily grown to experience their innumerable medicinal benefits.

Roses actually offer multitude beauty-enhancing benefits. Even dried petals of this iconic flower specifically do beauty wonders on the skin. The ancient Greeks and Romans used rose petals in fresh or dried forms to perfume their baths. In distilled forms, they have been included in cosmetics, medicines and therapeutic treatments for centuries. The treatment for a host of ailments including abrasions, burns and skin conditions can be accomplished by antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral property contained rose essential oil. It helps to treat acne and acne-prone skin while due to its cleansing properties, acts as an ideal ingredient in face washes and cleansers. As a natural astringent, rose water formulated using 1 cup of tightly packed fresh or dried rose petals along with boiled 2 cups of spring water followed by straining through a cheese cloth into a glass jar helps to tighten pores, reduces inflammation, fights wrinkles, soothes and rehydrates the skin and also restores suppleness for a glowy complexion. It assists to intercept sunburn by shielding skin cells from damage, since rose holds high amounts of vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant. Not only that but the gentle fragrance acts as antidepressant and has aphrodisiac properties. In fact, dehydrated rose petals are a staple in Ayurvedic medicine to detoxify, calm and soothe the mind. Moreover, rose scented lotion or cream imparts an extra pleasant experience. Many organic



Rose petal lets after drying



Sweet rose *Gulkand*



Hand-made floral cards using yellow dried bunny rose petals

beauty products embrace dried rose petals for its delicate and intense aroma in lieu of artificial fragrances. Natural oils made from dried or fresh petals are predominantly worthwhile for sensitive skin to moisturize and generate a soothing feeling. Besides, the application of a well mixed paste made up of pre-soaked and mashed 8 dried rose petals along with 3 tablespoons of honey followed by a thorough cold water rinse create a calming face mask. So in fine, anyone can discover how these lush dried or fresh blossoms can make ones skin feel as velvety soft as a bed of roses.

In lieu of hurling wilted pretty rose petals of the bouquet in the trash its superior to make an indelible homemade gift i.e sweet rose petal potpourri since dried rose petals have a calming scent, and create a blend that leaves a lovely lingering scent in home easily. Firstly detached petals of 1 dozen roses are desiccated over a newspaper but when they have started to crisp around the edges they're placed in a sealable glass jar. To arrest the wonderful aroma, fixatives are appended and the mixture of ground cinnamon and ground lavender are sprinkled. Finally, after the inclusion of 4-5 drops of rose essential oil or rosewater, the closed container is left in a warm, dry spot for 24 hours followed by shaking at an interval of couple of days. Conclusively it adds fragrance to unmentionables. Apart from this, they have long been associated with love and help to open the heart chakra, decreases stress, tension, depression, and lighten the mood. Sipping on a cup of rose tea aids to tonify both the male and female reproductive systems by helping in the production of sperms and estrogen in men and women respectively as they are an aphrodisiac and contains flavonoids while phytosterols in roses help both sexes to balance their hormones. Furthermore, package of strewn dried rose petals across the bed and candles can make a candlelit room.

#### Economic potential of the dried rose petals

The easiest and least expensive way to cherish the beauty of flowers are drying. Out of ₹ 570 crore total exports from India during 2018-19 nearly 60% of Indian floriculture exports comprised dry flowers. Even after that the impact of this industry is not so profound due to irregular supply and non-systematic growing of

#### Few hardy rose varieties satisfactory for dehydration

Variety name	Class	Colour
Audrey Hepburn	Hybrid Tea	Pink
Winnipeg Parks	Shrub	Red
April Moon	Do	Yellow, Peach, Salmon
Golden Unicorn	Do	Do
Nearly Wild	Floribunda	Pink
Carefree Delight	Shrub	Do
William Buffin	Do	Do
Quadra	Shrub/Climber	Red
Champlain	Shrub	Do
Fiesta	Shrub	Do
Millie Walters	Miniature	Yellow, Peach, Salmon
Modern Sunrise	Shrub	Do
Sally Holmes	Do	Do
Mountain Music	Do	Multi-coloured
Mozart	Old garden	Do
Popcorn	Miniature	White
Country Dancer	Shrub	Pink
Stanwell Perpetual	Old garden	Do
Rural Rhythm	Shrub	Do

specialized flowers. However, the demand for dried rose petals is increasing at an impressive rate of 8-10% for its significant use as 'Pot-pourris' and therefore there is a great scope for the Indian entrepreneurs as our main customer is England. Apart from that, dried rose petals had also been exported from India (Cochin) to United Arab Emirates in 2016 at the quantity of 40 kg of total worth of ₹ 17,823. In view of the lockdown the collection from the natural habitats is hampered. At the same time other key constraints like lack of innovative technologies to meet the western dry flower market, absence of databank or traceability system for wild collection for the local artisans in dry flower industry, non-availability of solar power energy or renewable power sources, etc. has impacted the sector. So, some interventions including setup of research

institutions under ICAR exclusively to work for research and development of technologies for dry flowers, NOC from wild life department, documentation and fumigation treatment of dry flower export, development of dry flower infrastructures, etc. are mandatory. Collaterally, participation in specialized international trade fairs i.e. International Floriculture Trade Fair (IFTF) in Holland etc. and organizing market promotion programs in potential importing countries could also dissipate the economic viability of dehydrated rose petals.

#### Additional information for young entrepreneur

Dehydration technology can also be exploited for dehydration of promising colourful dried rose petals in its original colour and shape for long term enjoyment. Dry flower market has grown exponentially as consumers become “eco-conscious” and choose dried flowers as the environmentally friendly and biodegradable alternative to fresh flowers. Training and entrepreneurship promotion for production and export of dried rose petals is paramount, so, tribal women, unemployed youth could be trained under Skilling India and Standup India. Since this industry depends heavily on synthetic dyes for colouring the dry flowers and adding flavors and fragrances, thus, Integrated Flori Malls with essential oil units, pigment and dye extraction units could support the dry flower industry especially the potential of dried pot-pourri to complete the

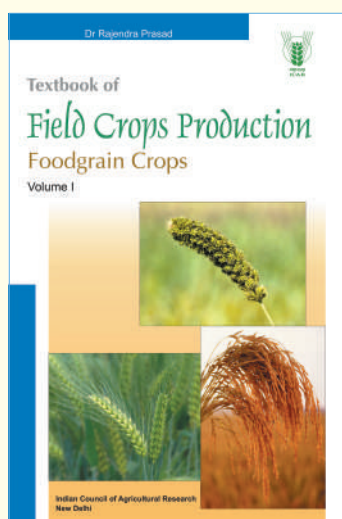
value chain. In nutshell, there is large potential to develop the dried rose petals industry in every country and to provide employment to house wives and rural women.

Now-a-days most of the rose lovers plant roses in their garden specifically for their eat-and use-ability owing to the versatility of dried and fresh rose petals. Roses are heart-stopping beautiful to the eye, and their aroma is equally show-stopping. With such an impressive presence, the rose is bound to stir up attention in human culture, and thus has ancient symbolic meanings throughout human history. They have proved their veritable worth owing to its exhaustive use in health and medicine since their dried petals are affluent by antioxidants and polyphenols furnish innumerable health benefits. Often dried rose petals are preferable when they come to crystallizing and cake decoration while several distinctive rose-flower flavours such as rose water, rose preserves, rose syrups and rose petal infusions can also be prepared from dehydrated ones. Hence, ethereal beauty and soothing fragrance of desiccated rose petals bound rose fans instinctively to entwine them with notions of beauty and love.

For further interaction, please write to:

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#### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

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