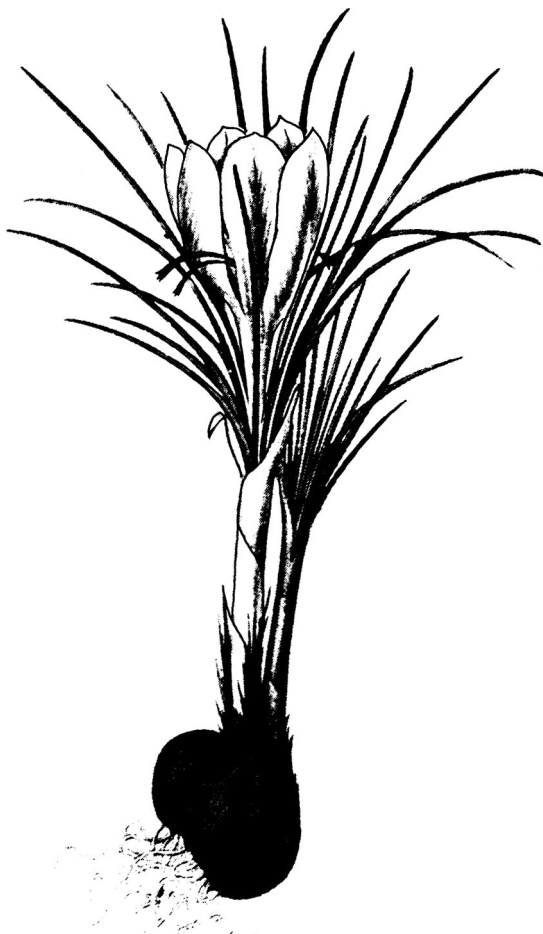


105. *CROCUS SATIVUS* L. (IRIDACEAE) — Saffron, Saffron Crocus

Saffron is cultivated for the coloring dye obtained from the stigmas of the flowers; about 100,000 flowers yield 1 kg saffron. Dye used chiefly as a coloring agent and spice in cookery (especially Spanish), soups, stews, especially chicken dishes, and in confectionery to give color, flavor, and aroma. Used in cosmetics for eyebrows and nail polishes, and as incense. Dioscorides mentions its use as a perfume. Dissolved in water, it is used as an ink and is applied to foreheads on religious and ceremonial occasions. The gold of cookery is now almost as expensive as the gold of jewelry.

Saffron is an extremely often cited folk remedy for various types of cancer, e.g., tumors of the abdomen, bladder, ear, eye, kidney, liver, neck, spleen, stomach, and tonsils, as well as cancers of the breast, mouth, stomach, and uterus, venereal condylomata, warts, etc.⁴ Saffron is used to promote eruption of measles, and in small doses is considered anodyne, antihysterical, antiseptic, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, balsamic, cardiotoxic, carminative, diaphoretic, ecbolic, emmenagogue, expectorant, nervine, sedative, stimulant, and stomachic, but overdoses are narcotic, and saffron corms are toxic to young animals. Apoplexy and extravagant gaiety are possible aftereffects. Saffron is not included in American and British pharmacopeias, but some Indian medical formulas still include it. It is sometimes used to promote menstruation. In India, saffron is regarded for bladder, kidney, and liver