

Character Builder 您好嗎？

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about plant symbolism

菊

Pronunciation: *ju* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *guk* (Cantonese 1st tone)
Basic meaning: chrysanthemum

菊 symbolizes 隱士 (*yin shi* = disappear~scholar = hermit). 梅蘭菊竹 (*mei lan ju zhu* = plum~orchid~chrysanthemum~bamboo), called 四君子 (*si jun zi* = four~gentlemen), are common art motifs. 雛菊 (*chu ju* = baby~chrysanthemums) = daisies. Daisy chain is 菊花鏈 (*ju hua lian* = chrysanthemum~flower~chain).

菊展 (*ju zhan* = chrysanthemum~exhibitions) and 持螯賞菊 (*chi ao shang ju* = hold~crab-claw~admire~chrysanthemum = eat crabs, see chrysanthemums) are autumn activities.

菊 can 入藥 (*ru yao* = enter~medicine = be used in Chinese medicine) to 清熱 (*qing re* = clear/clean~heat = clean/cool the body system). 菊花晶 (*ju hua jing* = chrysanthemum~flower~crystals) solution makes chrysanthemum beverage. 菊花茶 (*ju hua cha* = chrysanthemum~flower~tea) is tea brewed with chrysanthemum petals.

by Diana Yue