

A wide-angle photograph of a field of purple flax flowers. The flowers are in full bloom, with many showing their characteristic four-petaled structure. The field extends to a flat horizon under a clear, bright blue sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

The History of Flax

(Common Flax;
Linum usitatissimum)

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Common Flax

(*Linum usitatissimum*)

- Genus *Linum*, in *Linaceae* family.
- Annual plant
 - grows up to 47 inches
 - thin leaves and stems.
 - Five-petal blue (to purple) flowers.



http://www.mdidea.com/products/new/flax_flower01.jpg
<http://www.fleurdandeol.com/pic/msc/flax3.jpg>

The origins of Flax

- Originated in the Mediterranean region into India.
- Used in Egypt to wrap mummies
- Early colonists grew small home plots
- Began to be commercially processed starting around 1750
- Declined when cotton gin became popular

Agriculture and Production

- Flax grows well in temperate and sub-tropical regions in both hemisphere
 - France, Belgium, Russia, China, and Egypt grow a lot of the fiber flax currently
 - Minnesota and the Dakotas grow seed flax in the US
- There are two common types of flax planted



<http://www.naturallygreen.co.uk/images/flaxseed.jpg>

Uses

- Fiber
 - From Egypt to Modern Industry
 - Textiles, rope, paper
- Food
 - Human food from seeds, fiber, oil
 - Livestock feed
- Pharmacy
 - (Omega-3 fatty acids)
 - Heart health
 - skin treatment and cosmetics
- Also used for ornamental purposes

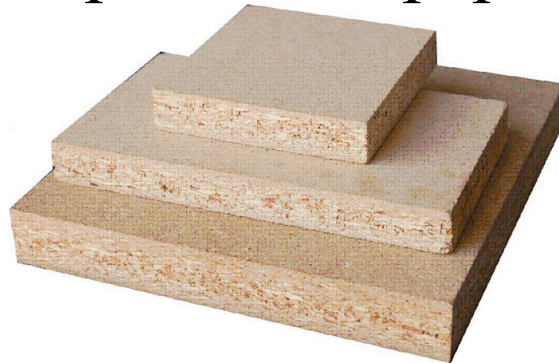


Omega-3 fatty acids

- Omega-3 fatty acids in linseed oil may help prevent certain cancers.
- Omega-3's are also helpful for mental health
- Helps lower cholesterol and regulate blood pressure
- Flax also has very high level of lignans

Many other uses

- Flax in animal feed
 - Livestock and chickens
 - Aids digestion and
 - fortifies eggs
- Flaxseed oil (linseed) also used for oil-painting agents, specialized paper, particleboard, varnish



http://riverglenfarm.ca/__oneclick_uploads/2008/07/eggs.jpg

<http://www.sghongsheng.com/image/Plain%20particle%20board1.jpg>

http://www.frontera.com/assets/inline_images/39_braz%20cherry%20with%20linseed%20oil.jpg