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### *Adonis annua*

[Synonyms : *Adonis annua* subsp. *autumnalis*, *Adonis atrorubens*, *Adonis autumnalis*]

**PHEASANT’S-EYE** is an annual. Native to southern Europe and south-western Asia it has scarlet flowers with a central black eye and dark purple stamens.

It is also known as *Adonido aŭtuna* (Esperanto), Adonis, Adonis flower, Autumn adonis, Blooddrops, Chamomile, False hellebore, *Ghallet is-serduq* (Maltese), *Goute dé sàng* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Gossen i det gröna* (Swedish), *Herfstadonis* (Dutch), *Hlavaček roční* (Czech), *Hlavačik* (Slovak), *Hlaváčkovec podzimni* (Czech), *Höstadonis* (Swedish), Jack in the green, *Llygad y Goediar Gwanwynol* (Welsh), Love lies bleeding, *Ohníček roční* (Czech), Red chamomile, Red mathes, Red maythes, Red marocco, Red morocco, Rose-a-rubie, *Syysruusuleinikki* (Finnish), and *Teufelsauge* (German); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of ‘I cannot forget you’, memories, and remembrance.

The flowers are pollinated by bees.

Warning – authorities advise that pheasant’s-eye must be treated as potentially poisonous.

In Britain pheasant’s-eye is considered to be endangered in the wild.

*Annua* means ‘annual’.

To celebrate the return of Adonis to Earth in Spring and Summer the ancient Greeks often followed the Semitic practice of cultivating Adonis gardens. Clay pots, graced with images of the god, were planted with quick-germinating seeds – then at the end of the season they were thrown into the sea or the fountains.

Authorities have noted, apparently with some bewilderment as the plant has little to commend it in culinary, decorative or medicinal qualities, that under the name Red marocco it was heard as one of the English hawkers’ street cries in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

Today pheasant’s-eye is primarily cultivated as an ornamental plant.

It is the birthday flower for 16<sup>th</sup> September.