

You are viewing one of thousands of biographies – click below for more, including Search box and access to Plant associated organisations.

[Plant Biographies](#)

[Bibliography](#)

---

*Anchusa officinalis*

[Synonyms : *Anchusa angustifolia*, *Anchusa osmanica*, *Anchusa procera*]

**BUGLOSS** is a biennial or perennial. Native to Europe and western Asia it has purple, blue or pale pink (occasionally white) flowers.

It is also known as Alkanet (English, German), *Bouarâge sauvâge* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Buglosse* (French), Common alkanet, Common anchusa, Common bugloss, *Gemeine Ochsenzunge* (German), *Gewöhnliche Ochsenzunge* (German), *Læge-oksetunge* (Danish), *Ossentong* (Dutch), Ox tongue, *Oxtunga* (Swedish), *Pilát lékařský* (Czech), *P'tite g'linne* (Channel Islander-Jersey Norman-French), *Rohtorasti* (Finnish), *Smohla lekárska* (Slovak), True alkanet, and *Vanlig oxtunga* (Swedish); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of falsehood.

Bugloss is similar in appearance to both henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*) and hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) apart from the latter's spiny fruit.

*Officinalis* means 'of the shop (usually the apothecary's or herbalist's)'. Certain plants used for medicinal purposes, whether of actual or legendary value, were kept readily available and acquired this name.

The common name of this member of the Forget-me-not family, Bugloss, reflects the appearance of its leaves and is said to be derived from a Greek word *buglossa* meaning 'ox tongue'.

Young leaves of bugloss used to be eaten as a vegetable (an alternative to cabbage, *Brassica oleracea* var. *capitata*) and were also an ingredient in a wine brewed for a cold drink, the flowers were made into a conserve, and in medieval European kitchens (when food was garishly coloured) bugloss roots were relied upon to impart a red colouring to dishes.

The roots were also used to make a cosmetic rouge.

Medicinally, herbalists once recommended bugloss for treating melancholia and epilepsy.