

Anemone pulsatilla

[Synonyms : *Pulsatilla vulgaris*]

PASQUEFLOWER is a perennial. Native to central and northern Europe (including Britain) it has dark violet-purple flower heads with many golden stamens.

It is also known as *Anémone* (French), April fools, Badgers, *Backsippa* (Swedish), *Backvippa* (Swedish), Blue emony, Blue money, Blue tulip, Cat's eyes, Common pasque flower, Coventry bells, Crocus, Dane's blood, Dane's flower, Dream herb, Easter flower, European pasqueflower, *Fiore de dame* (Italian), *Fiore di vento* (Italian), Flaw flower, *Fleur de Pâque* (French), Flower-of-the-wind, *Gewöhnliche Küchenschelle* (German), *Gewöhnliche Kuhschelle* (German), *Göskälla* (Swedish), Gosling, Hartshorn plant, Headache plant, *Herbe au vent* (French), *Konikleč německý* (Czech), *Küchenschelle* (German), *Kuhschelle* (German), *Lännenkylmänkukka* (Finnish), May flower, Meadow anemone, *Opret kobjælde* (Danish), Pasqueflower anemone, Passe flower, *Ponikleč* (Slovak), Prairie anemone, Prairie smoke, Pulsatilla (English, Spanish), *Pulsatille* (French), Rock lily, *Rüzigyar çiç* (Turkish), *Shakaykel-naaman* (Persian), *Stor kubjolle* (Norwegian), *Tarhakylmänkukka* (Finnish), Wild crocus, *Wildemanskruid* (Dutch), and Windflower; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of expectation, 'I have no claims', sickness, and 'you have no claims'.

The flowers are particularly attractive to bees.

Oil of anemone (which has a burning peppery taste) is obtained by distillation of the fresh plant.

Warning – the leaves and sap of the fresh plant are poisonous and can cause depression, nervous and stomach disorders and skin inflammation. Bruised leaves can cause dermatitis. Dried it should be used by a qualified practitioner. It can be poisonous for animals. (Records exist of young cattle in Yugoslavia being poisoned by eating the plant.)

In Britain pasqueflower is considered to be endangered in the wild.

Pulsatilla is derived from Latin *pulso* (to beat, to strike, knock) and authorities are unsure of the relevance.

Some people have contended that Pasqueflower acquired this name because the juice in the purplish leaves round the flower (which will stain paper and linen an impermanent green) was used to colour Paschal (Easter) eggs in some countries. However John Gerard (1545-1612) the English barber-surgeon and herbalist (the latter as a charlatan for many authorities) is said to have declared that he so named it because the flower blooms during the religious Paschal, Easter or Passover ceremonies.

Roman legend has it that the pasqueflower arose from the tears of Venus – and other legend tells that the flower opens only when the wind is blowing. In European and English folklore the flower is said to bloom only where according to the district Saxon or Danish blood has been spilt.

Medicinally, the pasqueflower was prescribed by herbalists as an emetic particularly in central Europe – but it was believed that its use in any remedy would be most effective only if the patient was a lady with fair hair and blue eyes. Pasqueflower has also been used in

Chinese medicine for thousands of years. Today especially in central Europe it can be used as a sedative as well as for treating catarrh, nervous exhaustion, neuralgia, headaches and period problems. It can also be used in homoeopathic treatments. It is the birthday flower for 22nd June.