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*Botrychium lunaria*

[Synonyms : *Botrychium lunaria* var. *onondagense*, *Botrychium onondagense*, *Botrypus lunaria*, *Osmunda lunaria*]

**MOONWORT** is a deciduous fern. Native to Europe, it has small green fronds.

It is also known as *Almindelig Månerude* (Danish), Common moonwort, *Echte Mondraute* (German), *Gemeine Mondraute* (German), *Låsbräken* (Swedish), Lunary, *Maanvaren* (Dutch), *Månlåsbräken* (Swedish), *Mondraute* (German), Moon-fern, Moonwort fern, Moonwort grapefern, Unshoe-the-horse, *Vanlig låsbräken* (Swedish), *Vratička mesiačikovitá* (Slovak), and *Vratička měsíční* (Czech); and in flower language it is said to be a symbol of forgetfulness.

*Lunaria* is derived from Latin *luna* (moon) with reference to the common name moonwort.

Believed to have magical powers in Europe, especially if gathered under moonlight, moonwort was used by witches as they performed their incantations. Country people thought it could unshoe any horse that trod on it – a superstition voiced in a poem written in his mid-thirties by the English poet and pamphleteer George Wither (1588-1667)

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There is an herb, some say, whose virtue's such,  
It in the pasture, only with a touch,  
Unshoes the new-shod steed.

Apparently it also had the power to loosen leg-irons and open locks – and belief in this was such that some burglars even went to the lengths of making a cut in their hand in which to place a piece of the plant.

Medicinally, herbalists recommended the fronds for healing wounds. It has also been used to treat dysentery.