

*Calla palustris*

[Synonyms : *Calla brevis*, *Calla cordifolia*, *Calla generalis*, *Calla palustris* forma *ariformis*, *Calla palustris* forma *gracilis*, *Calla palustris* forma *palustris*, *Calla palustris* forma *polyspathacea*, *Callaion bispatha*, *Callaion brevis*, *Callaion heterophylla*, *Callaion palustris*, *Dracunculus paludosus*, *Provenzalia bispatha*, *Provenzalia brevis*, *Provenzalia heterophylla*, *Provenzalia palustris*]

**BOG ARUM** is a deciduous or semi-evergreen aquatic perennial. Native to northern temperate areas (particularly North America), it has a knob-shaped spike (spadix) of tiny, yellowish-green flowers framed by a large, white-lined, green leaf-like bract (spathe).

It is also known as *Arum d'eau* (French), Arum lily, *Calla*, *Calla des marais* (French), *D'áblik bahenní* (Czech), *Diablik močiarny* (Slovak), *Drachenwurz* (German), *Kærmysse* (Danish), Marsh calla, *Missne* (Swedish), *Schlange wurz* (German), *Suovehka* (Finnish), Swamp lily, Water arum, Water dragon, and Wild calla; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of beauty, and maiden modesty.

It is pollinated by water snails.

Warning – can only be used under the supervision of a qualified practitioner. The fresh plant can cause intense burning and irritation in the mouth (usually sufficient to prevent swallowing which could cause violent gastroenteritis and death). Handling the fresh plant can cause blistering.

(The calla lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) belongs to a different genus in the same family.) *Palustris* is derived from Latin *palus* (bog, marsh) meaning 'of or from bogs, swamps or marshes'.

The dried roots, when boiled, are used by Laplanders to make a kind of bread.

According to records it was familiar medicinally to one or two North American Indian tribes although, for instance, some of the Cree who used its aerial stems to treat sore legs well appreciated how carefully it needed to be handled because of its poisonous nature. The Potawatomi tribe applied root poultices to swellings, and the Iroquois used a similar treatment for some snake bites. Root decoctions were taken by the Gitksan Indians for several remedies for treating haemorrhaging, shortness of breath and influenza.