

### *Campanula rotundifolia*

[Synonyms : *Campanula alaskana*, *Campanula diversifolia*, *Campanula dubia*, *Campanula gieseckiana*, *Campanula gieseckiana* var. *arctica*, *Campanula gieseckiana* subsp. *groenlandica*, *Campanula groenlandica*, *Campanula heterodoxa*, *Campanula heterophylla*, *Campanula intercedens*, *Campanula linifolia*, *Campanula minor*, *Campanula petiolata*, *Campanula petulata*, *Campanula rotundifolia* var. *alaskana*, *Campanula rotundifolia* var. *alpina*, *Campanula rotundifolia* var. *arctica*, *Campanula rotundifolia* subsp. *groenlandica*, *Campanula rotundifolia* var. *intercedens*, *Campanula rotundifolia* var. *lancifolia*, *Campanula rotundifolia* var. *petiolata*, *Campanula rotundifolia* var. *velutina*, *Campanula sacajaweana*]

**HAREBELL** is a perennial. Native to the temperate northern hemisphere it has blue flowers. It is also known as American harebell, Bellflower, *Blåklocka* (Swedish), Blaver, Blawort, *Bluebell* (Scottish), Bluebell bellflower, Bluebells of Scotland, Blue blavers, Bluebottle, *Campanule à feuilles rondes* (French), *Clychlys Deilgrwn* (Welsh), Corn violet, Cuckoos, Cuckoo shoe, Ding dongs, English harebell, Fairy bells, Fairy cap, Fairy cup, Fairy ringers, Fairy thimble, Gowk's thimbles, Granny's tears, Harebell bellflower, Hairbell, Heathbell, Heather bells, *Kampanulo rondfolia* (Esperanto), *Kissankello* (Finnish), Lady's thimble, *Linden klokke* (Danish), Milk-wort, Old man's bell, Old man's bellflower, Olympian bellflower, Round-leaved bellflower, *Rundblättrige Glockenblume* (German), St. George's cup, School bell, Scotch bluebell, Scottish bluebell, Sheep bell, Thimbles, Varied-leaf bluebell, Wild thimbles, Wind bells, Witch bells, Witches' thimbles, *Zvonček* (Slovak), and *Zvonek okrouhlostý* (Czech); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of childhood, grief, humility, and submission.

The flowers are pollinated by bees and other insects, and the seeds are distributed by the wind. *Rotundifolia* is Latin *rotunda* (round, circular) and *-folia* (leaved) components meaning 'rounded-leaved'.

The English common name Harebell is said by some to have come about because it is found in dry pastures loved by hares. Others contend it refers to a 'witch animal' and for yet others it provides a description of the flower and stem (the latter is thread-like) as the name was sometimes spelled Hairbell. Particularly in old writing and poetry the harebell has often been confused with the bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) although the two plants come from completely different families (the latter *Hyacinthaceae*). This is perpetuated in Scotland where in some parts today the harebell is still called Bluebell and the bluebell 'harebell'.

In many country districts the harebell was feared and considered dangerous and closely connected with fairies and goblins – although in North America some of the Navajo Indian tribe believed that if the plant was rubbed on the body it would give protection in hunting as well as witchcraft (and they also used it in ceremonial healing rituals).

Christian lore associates the harebell with the Virgin Mary, and the flower is dedicated in some Roman Catholic countries to St. Dominic (c.1170-1221) the patron saint of astronomers.

The harebell, under the Scottish name Bluebell, has been adopted in the past as a floral emblem of Scotland.

To dream of harebells is said to indicate true love.

The English hymnwriter and prelate, Reginald Heber (1783-1826) who served as Bishop of Calcutta for three years before his sudden death and may be remembered today for writing *Holy, holy, holy* and *Hark, the herald angels sing*, was also a poet. One of his poems was *The Harebell* which begins

With drooping bells of clearest blue,  
Thou didst attract my childish view,  
Almost resembling  
The azure butterflies that flew,  
Where on the heath thy blossoms grew  
So lightly trembling.

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In North America several Indian tribes looked to the plant for medicine. Some of the Chippewa tribe used the root as an ingredient in a potion used for treating various lung troubles, and the Chippewa also used a root infusion for curing some eye disorders. The Thompson Indians used a plant decoction for the latter, and some of the Cree tribe believed that chewing the root could be beneficial for heart problems.