

*Centranthus ruber*

[Synonyms : *Centranthus latifolius*, *Centranthus marinus*, *Centranthus maritimus*, *Kentranthus ruber*, *Valeriana coccinea*, *Valeriana florida*, *Valeriana ruber*, *Valeriana rubra*]

**RED VALERIAN** is a perennial. Native to the Mediterranean and Europe, it has tiny, catty smelling, pink or red (occasionally white) flowers.

It is also known as American lilac, Bloody butcher, *Bonami* (Greek), Bouncing Bess, Bovisand sailor, Bovisand soldier, Cat bed, *Centranthe* (French), *Centranto ruĝa* (Esperanto), Convict grass, Delicate Bess, Devon pride, Drunkards, Drunkard's nose, Drunken sailor, Drunken Willy, *Flerårig pipört* (Swedish), Fox's brush, Garden valerian, German laylock, German lilac, Gipsy maids, Good neighbourhood, Good neighbours, Ground laylock, Jupiter's beard, Keys of heaven, Kissing-kind, Kiss-me, Kiss-me-love, Kiss-me-quick, Lady Betty, Lady's needlework, *Lilas d'Espagne* (French), *Lilas d'Espangne* (Channel Islander-Jersey Norman-French), *Mavuň červená* (Czech), Midsummer men, Old woman's needlework, *Pipört* (Swedish), Pretty baby, Pretty Betsy, Prince of Wales's feather, *Punavirma* (Finnish), Queen Anne's needlework, Quiet neighbours, Red cow basil, Red money, Red-spurred valerian, Red-spur valerian, *Röd Valeriana* (Swedish), Roguery, *Rosa da Rocha* (Portuguese), *Rote Spornblume* (German), Saucy Bet, Scarlet lightning, Spanish valerian, Spur valerian, Soldier boys, *Sporebaldrian* (Danish), Sweet Betsy, Sweet Mary, *Toppu tar-Regina* (Maltese), *Triaglog Coch* (Welsh), *Trizoluoklia* (Greek), *Valériane rouge* (French), and *Violette dé muraille* (Channel Islander-Guernsey).

*Ruber* is Latin (red) with reference to the colour of the flower.

In continental Europe countries (particularly France and Italy) add the bitter leaves to salads, and cook them as a vegetable, despite their catty smell. In France the root is added to soups too.

The seeds were once used for embalming the dead.

Authorities think that red valerian was first seen in English gardens in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, and the dried stems were once popular as peashooters.

It is understood that this plant does not have any of the medicinal properties of its close relative common valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*).