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Conopodium majus

[Synonyms : *Bunium flexuosum*, *Bunium majus*, *Conopodium denudatum*]

PIGNUT is a perennial. Native to Europe it has tiny, often brown-veined beneath, white flowers.

It is also known as Arnut, Bad man's bread, *Bunion bulbeux* (French), Cain and Abel, Catnut, *Cnau'r Ddaear* (Welsh), Cuckoo potato, Curluns, Deil's bread, Deil's oatmeal, Earth chestnut, Earth-nut, Fairy potatoes, Farenut, Fern-nut, Gernut, Gourlins, Gowlins, Groundnut, Grovenut, Harenut, Hognut, Hornecks, Jack-durnals, Jack-jennets, Jacky-journals, Jocky-journals, Jog-journals, *Jordnöt* (Swedish), Kellas, Kelly, Killimore, Kipper nut, Knotty meal, Jur nut, Lousy arnuts, Lucy arnut, *Nötkörvel* (Swedish), St. Anthony's nut, Scabby hands, Swine-bread, Truffle, Underground nut, Varenut, Yennett, Yowe-yornut, and Yowie-yorlin.

Majus is derived from Latin *maior* (greater) meaning 'greater, bigger or larger'.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), the English playwright and poet, refers to pignut in *The Tempest* when Caliban says

I pr'ythee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;
And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts;
Show thee a jay's nest,

It has proved impossible, so far, to cultivate this traditional country children's delicacy.

Although pignuts are usually eaten raw (possibly with a little pepper added), some authorities recommend that they be roasted and the English diarist and author, John Evelyn (1620-1706), noted that for him they were best when boiled or added to a stew.