

*Consolida regalis*

[Synonyms : *Consolida segetum*, *Delphinium consolida*]

**FIELD LARKSPUR** is an annual. Native to Europe it has blue flowers each with 1 upward and backward-curving spur.

It is also known as *Acker-Rittersporn* (German), Branching larkspur, *Consoude royale* (French), *Feld-Rittersporn* (German), Forking larkspur, Garden larkspur, *Guli-aspaska-far* (Persian), King's consound, Knight's spur, Lark heel, Lark's claw, Lark's heel, Larkspur, Lark's toe, *Obertarkh* (Arabic), *Ostrôžka pol'ná* (Slovak), *Ostrožka stračka* (Czech), *Riddarsporre* (Swedish), *Rikkakukonkannus* (Finnish), *Rittersporn* (German), Royal knight's spur, Staggerweed, Stavesacre, *Stračka polní* (Czech), *Vild riddarsporre* (Swedish), and *Yspardun y Marchog* (Welsh); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of fickleness (pink), haughtiness (purple), levity, and lightness.

The flowers are pollinated by bees.

If the flowers are gathered for any purpose the seeds should be removed and destroyed. The flowering plant needs to be harvested before the seeds are formed.

Warning – the whole plant contains poisonous substances with variable potency but they are in their highest concentration in the seeds (which drop out of the plant easily) and in young plants. These can act on the central nervous system and can cause abdominal pain, constipation, nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, dry skin and mouth, restlessness, agitation, dilated pupils, respiratory paralysis and general weakness (as a result of which vomit may enter the lungs and cause respiratory difficulties). It is poisonous for animals.

*Regalis* is Latin (royal, regal) meaning 'royal or of outstanding merit'.

In Tudor times in England it was believed that the seeds (which were used to destroy body and hair lice) could keep poisonous insects at bay if placed in their path.

Medicinally, herbalists used to recommend the use of field larkspur internally for treating fluid retention, asthma, rheumatism and wind – and it was applied externally for piles. Today it is considered to be so poisonous that, with care, it is only used for destroying lice and nits in the hair.

Field larkspur is associated with July.