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Cyclamen purpurascens

[Synonyms : *Cyclamen europaeum*, *Cyclamen fatrense*, *Cyclamen odoratum*]

SOWBREAD is a perennial. Native to Europe (particularly Hungary south to Italy), it has strongly scented, white through pink to reddish-violet flowers with petals pointing backwards.

It is also known as *Alpenveilchen* (German), Alp's violet, Bleeding nun, *Brambořík evropský* (Czech), *Brambořík nachový* (Czech), Common cyclamen, Cyclamen, *Cyklámen purpurový* (Slovak), European cyclamen, *Gewöhnliche Zyclame* (German), Groundbread, Hardy cyclamen, *Hathajori* (Hindi, Urdu), Maiden weed, Swinebread, and *Wildes Alpenveilchen* (German); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of diffidence.

The flowers roll up to enable the seeds to ripen protected by their leaves.

Warning – very small doses are poisonous for humans. It can only be taken internally under supervision from a qualified practitioner.

Purpurascens is derived from Latin *purpura* (purple, purple dye) meaning 'purplish'.

The common name Sowbread arose because wild pigs used to be able to dig the plant up easily to get at the roots which they ate with particular relish.

Very old records show that past civilizations used the plant as an arrowhead poison.

One of sowbread's fascinating qualities, shared with only a few other plants, is that it is believed to be slightly radioactive when fresh.