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Euphorbia amygdaloides

[Synonyms : *Euphorbia sylvatica*, *Tithymalus amygdaloides*]

WOOD SPURGE is an evergreen perennial. Native to the Mediterranean it has greenish-yellow flowers.

It is also known as Bible leaf, Cat's milk, Churn staff, Deer's milk, Devil's cup and saucer, Devil's milk, Green grower, Little-good, *Llaethlys y Coed* (Welsh), *Mandelblättrige Wolfsmilch* (German), *Mandeltörel* (Swedish) Mare's tail, *Mliečnik* (Slovak), Potatoes-in-the-dish, *Pryšec mandloňovitý* (Czech), *Skogstörel* (Swedish), Virgin Mary's nipple, and Wartweed.

Warning – wood spurge is poisonous and has a drastic purgative effect. It can also cause a burning sensation in the mouth, delirium, dizziness, gastric upset, paleness, irregular pulse and collapse. It should be used only under the supervision of a qualified practitioner. The sap is a skin irritant.

Amygdaloides is made up of the genus name *Amygdalus* (now *Prunus*) and Greek *-oides* (like) components meaning 'like plants in that (almond) genus'.

Wood spurge as some of its names imply attracted its share of superstition. Harvesting the plant once required particular care. You had to have your back to the wind and ensure that your hands did not touch either your face or your eyes.

This species was claimed to be effective as a mole repellent.

Medicinally, herbalists recommended the plant, usually in association with others, for treating various disorders including toothache.