

Geranium macrorrhizum

[Synonyms : *Geranium macrorrhizum roseum*]

BALKAN CRANE'S BILL is a semi-evergreen perennial. Native to southern Europe (south-eastern Alps and the Balkans) it has magenta-pink flowers with violet stamens.

It is also known as Bigroot cranesbill, Bigroot geranium, Cranesbill, *Düsterer Storchschnabel* (German), Geranium, *Felsenstorchschnabel* (German), *Flocknäva* (Swedish), *Géranium* (French), *Geranio* (Italian), Hardy geranium, *Kakost oddenkatý* (Czech), *Kurjenpolvilaji* (Finnish), *Pakost* (Slovak), and Rock cranesbill; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of bridal favour (ivy-leaved), comfort (scarlet), comforting (scarlet), (an) expected meeting (nutmeg); gaiety (scarlet), gentility, 'I engage you for the next dance' (ivy-leaved), ingenuity (pencil-leaved), melancholy (dark red), preference (rose or pink), recall (silver-leaved), steadfast piety (wild), and true friendship (oak-leaved).

The flowers are pollinated by bees and other insects.

Essential oil is extracted from the whole plant by steam distillation.

Macrorrhizum is made up of Greek *macro-* (large, long) and *-rrhiza* (root) components meaning 'large-rooted or with large root stocks'.

It is the only wild crane's bill that has a strong scent and in Bulgaria where it is grown commercially it is used as an aphrodisiac.

Balkan crane's bill had been introduced to Britain by the mid-16th Century as the Flemish naturalist, Matthias de l'Obel (1538-1616), recorded seeing it in cultivation there in 1576.

At that time it seems to have had a short-lived medicinal reputation for some people.

The oil is used commercially by the cosmetics and toiletry industries, the latter especially for soap. It is also an ingredient used by the perfumery industry.

Dark red is the birthday flower for 24th November.

Silver-leafed is the birthday flower for 26th November.

Scarlet is the birthday flower for 1st December.