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Helleborus viridis

GREEN HELLEBORE is a deciduous perennial. Native to southern and western Europe (including Britain) it has small slightly fragrant, yellowish-green flower heads. It is also known as *Baladra* (Spanish), Bear's-foot, Boar's foot, *Čemeřice zelená* (Czech), *Ellébore vert* (French), *Elleboro verde* (Italian), False hellebore, Fellon grass, Green lily, *Grön julros* (Swedish), *Grön prustrot* (Swedish), *Grüne Nieswurz* (German), *Helébore verde* (Spanish), Hellebore, *Kalikatuki* (Hindi), *Krishna bhedi* (Sanskrit), Indian poke, She-barfoot, White hellebore, and Winter hellebore; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of calumny, and scandal.

The flowers are pollinated by bees.

Warning – all parts of the plant are poisonous. It can cause roaring in the ears, sneezing, excess saliva, diarrhoea, nausea and reduced heart rate. It should not be used for medicinal purposes without the supervision of a qualified practitioner.

Viridis is Latin (green) with reference to the flowers.

After its introduction to North America some North American Indian tribes included green hellebore in their initiation ceremonies.

For centuries the plant used to be familiar in European veterinary medicine, particularly for treating cattle.

Medicinally, green hellebore was once used in both folk medicine and orthodox Western medicine. For the latter some authorities note that 18th Century physicians practising at Guy's Hospital in London relied upon a large quantity of the roots being brought in from the country each year. In folk medicine green hellebore was used to treat children's worms (often with fatal results) as well as boils and spots.