

Hibiscus syriacus

[Synonyms : *Althaea frutex*, *Althaea syriaca*, *Hibiscus acerifolius*, *Hibiscus chinensis*, *Hibiscus floridus*, *Hibiscus rhombifolius*, *Hibiscus syriacus* var. *chinensis*, *Ketmia arborea*, *Ketmia syriaca*, *Ketmia syrorum*]

ROSE OF SHARON is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native to eastern Asia (particularly China and India) it has pink, purple, blue, red or white flowers usually bearing a crimson spot at the base.

It is also known as *Althaeaboompje* (Dutch), *Althea*, *Blå Hibiskus* (Swedish), *Blue hibiscus*, *Blue satin rose of Sharon*, *Cardeal Roxo* (Portuguese), *Chaba chin* (Thai), *Frilandshibiskus* (Swedish), *Hachisu* (Japanese), *Havelhibiscus* (Danish), *Hibisco* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Hibisco da Siria* (Portuguese), *Hibiscus* (English, French), *Ibišek syrský* (Czech), *Ibišteň syrský* (Slovak), *Ketmia syryjska* (Polish), *Ketmie* (French), *Mauve en arbre* (French), *Mokuge* (Japanese), *Mokukinka* (Japanese), *Moo goong hwa* (Korean), *Mu jin* (Chinese), *Rosa de Siria* (Spanish), *Rose mallow*, *Roseneibisch* (German), *Rose of Sharon*, *Sharon's Rose* (Danish), *Shrub althaea*, *Shrubby althaea*, *Shrubby hollyhock*, *Shrub hollyhock*, *Shrub mallow*, *Sinihibiskus* (Finnish), *Syrian hibiscus*, *Syrian ketmia*, *Syrian mallow*, *Syrian rose*, *Syrischer Eibisch* (German), *Syrischer Rosen-Eibisch* (German), *Syrisk ros* (Swedish), *Tree hollyhock*, and *Tree mallow*; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of persuasion.

This species and its cultivated varieties are the common 'hibiscus' grown in gardens in temperate climates.

Syriacus means 'of or from Syria' (where it was thought initially, but incorrectly, that this species originated).

In the South Sea Islands girls can still be seen wearing the flowers in their hair. The positioning of them is said to be significant. 'I desire a lover' if behind the left ear, 'I have a lover' if it is placed behind the right ear and if a flower is behind both ears this is said to mean 'I have a lover, but would like another'.

In China paper has been made from bark fibre.

Also in China rose of Sharon has been used as hedging.

The plant was introduced to Britain in the 16th Century.

Medicinally, the flowers have been used externally in Chinese medicine to treat some skin disorders.