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Iberis umbellatus

GARDEN CANDYTUFT is an annual. Native to southern Europe (including Spain and Crete) it has white or pale purple flowers.

It is also known as Annual candytuft, Billy come home soon, Candytuft, *Carraspique* (Spanish), Common candytuft, Globe candytuft, *Iberka okoličnatá* (Czech), Purple candytuft, *Roseniberis* (Swedish), *Scheefbloem* (Dutch), Sciatic cress, Spanish tufts, and *Štěničnik okoličnatý* (Czech); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of indifference.

Umbellatus is derived from Latin *umbella* (parasol) meaning ‘bearing flattish-heads of flowers with stalks arising from one place’.

Garden candytuft was a native of Crete which used to be known as ‘Candia or Candy’ hence its common name.

In Greece according to Dioscorides, the noted 1st Century Greek physician, the seeds were made then into a mustard that was served with meat.

Garden candytuft was introduced to England from Crete in the 16th Century. Apparently John Gerard (1545-1612), the English herbalist (of doubtful repute for some authorities) and barber-surgeon, received some seeds from which he grew the the flower in his own garden.