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Lapsana communis

NIPPLEWORT is an annual or perennial. Native from Europe to northern Asia it has small, light yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Akkerkool* (Dutch), Ballagan, Ballogan, Bolgan-leaves, Carpenter's apron, *Cartheig* (Welsh), Common nipplewort, Dock cress, *Gemeiner Rainkohl* (German), *Harfibbla* (Swedish), *Harkål* (Swedish), Hasty rogers, Hasty sergeant, Holgan weed, Jack-in-a-bush, *Kapustka obecna* (Czech), *Laitron* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Lapsane commune* (French), *Linnunkaali* (Finnish), *Lýrovka obyčajná* (Slovak), Mary alone, Poor man's friend, *Rainkohl* (German), Succory dock, Succory dock cress, Swine's cress, and Wormwood.

Communis means 'common, general or growing with'.

From the Latin *papilla* (nipple) the plant was called *papillaris* in the 16th Century when traditionally it was used to treat cracked nipples (as it still can be today).

In some parts of England the leaves used to be boiled as a vegetable for the table.

Nipplewort's use may well have been derived in accordance with the 'Doctrine of Signatures', a theory in vogue in 16th Century Europe. This contended that a plant would be beneficial for that part of the human body it was believed to resemble, and nipplewort's unopened flower buds were alleged to be 'nipple-shaped'. In this instance the dogma proved to be correct.