

Linaria vulgaris

[Synonyms : *Antirrhinum linaria*, *Linaria linaria*]

COMMON TOADFLAX is an invasive perennial. Native to Asia and Europe it has small snapdragon-like spurred, orange-mouthed, yellow flowers with an orange line on the lower lip.

It is also known as Bacon and eggs, *Bianche surelle* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), Brandy-snap, Bread and butter, Bread and cheese, Brideweed, Bridewort, Bunny rabbits, Butter and eggs, Buttered haycocks, Calves' snout, Chopped eggs, Churnstaff, Continental weed, Dead men's bones, Devil's flax, Devil's flower, Devil's head, Devil's ribbon, Doggies, Dog's mouth, Dragon-bushes, Egg and butter, Eggs and bacon, Eggs and collops, *Éperonnière* (French), Fairies' lanterns, False flax, Fingers and thumbs, Flaxweed, Fluellin, Fox and hounds, Gallweed, Gallwort, Gaping jack, Gap mouth, *Gemeines Leinkraut* (German), *Gewöhnliches Leinkraut* (German), *Gulsporre* (Swedish), *Gulsporreblomma* (Swedish), Hog mouth, Imprudent lawyer, Impudent lawyer, Indian hemp, Jacob's ladder, *Květel* (Czech), Lady's slipper, Larkspur, Larkspur lion's mouth, *Leinkraut* (German), *Linaire* (French), *Linariță* (Rumanian), Lion's mouth, *Llin y Llyffant* (Welsh), *Lnice květel* (Czech), *Lnice obecná* (Czech), Monkey faces, Monkey flower, Monkey plant, Mother-of-millions, Mouse's mouth, *Ovčí hubičky* (Czech), *Paštička* (Czech), Pattens and clogs, Pedlar's basket, Pennywort, Pig's chops, Pig's mouth, Puppy dog's mouths, *Pyštek obyčejný* (Slovak), Rabbit ears, Rabbit flower, Rabbits, Rabbit's chops, Rabbit's mouths, Ramsted, Rancid, Ranstead, Ransted, Searchlight, Sheep's mouth, Shoes and stockings, Snapdragon, Snapdragon ramsted, Snapjacks, Snaps, *Sporreblomma* (Swedish), Squeezejaws, Strike, Toad, Toadflax, *Torskemund* (Norwegian), Urinals, Wax candles, Weasel-snout, Wild flax, Wild gapmouth, Wild snapdragon, Wild tobacco, Yellow flax, Yellow toadflax, and Yellow rod.

The orange 'streak' or 'tongue' on the flower's lower lip has been proven to act as a honey guide path for insects. The flowers are pollinated by bees.

Warning – common toadflax is a poisonous plant. It should only be used under the supervision of a qualified practitioner. It is poisonous for animals.

Vulgaris means 'common'.

Common toadflax was once used as the source of a yellow dye for cloth (particularly in Germany), and when boiled in milk the plant provided a flykiller in Sweden.

In the 17th Century it was recorded that some English folk found an unusual way of warding off intermittent fever. They placed common toadflax leaves between their toes and under their bare feet.

The plant came to the attention of some of the North American Indian tribes and among the Iroquois it attracted mystical associations as it offered an ingredient for a potion they took to counter bewitchment. It was also absorbed into the medicinal repertoire of some of the tribes. For instance the Chippewa Indians used it as an inhalant, while the Iroquois chose a cold leaf infusion as a remedy for diarrhoea.

Medicinally, herbalists used to recommend an infusion as an internal treatment for jaundice, liver diseases and fluid retention. Its flowers were an ingredient in an ointment used to

ease eye irritation. It was also used as a remedy for piles, boils and some skin infections. Today it is used in homoeopathic treatments.