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Linum catharticum

[Synonyms : *Cathartolinum catharticum*, *Nezera cathartica*]

FAIRY FLAX is an annual. Native to Europe and the Mediterranean it has small, yellow-centred, white flowers.

It is also known as Dwarf flax, Fairy lint, *Lan prečistujúci* (Slovak), *Len luční* (Czech), *Len počistivý* (Czech), *Llin y Tylwyth Teg* (Welsh), Mill mountain, Mountain flax, *Purgier-Lein* (German), Purging flax, *Vildlin* (Swedish), and White flax.

Warning – all parts of fairy flax are potentially poisonous. Large doses taken internally can cause diarrhoea and death (and can be equally poisonous for animals).

Catharticum is derived from Greek *cathartico*- component meaning ‘purging or cleansing’.

Medicinally, herbalists have recommended the plant as a laxative, and as a remedy for catarrhal infections and muscular rheumatism. Fairy flax is used today in homoeopathic treatments.