

*Menyanthes trifoliata*

[Synonyms : *Menyanthes trifoliata* var. *minor*, *Menyanthes verna*, *Trifolium finrinum*, *Trifolium paludosum*]

**BOGBean** is a deciduous aquatic perennial. Native to northern temperate regions (from North America to Siberia, including Iceland and Greenland) it has small shaggy white flowers that are pinkish or purplish fringed with reddish stamens.

It is also known as Bean trefoil, Beckbean, *Biberklee* (German), *Bitterklee* (German), Bitter root, Bitter trefoil, Bitterwort, *Bläcken* (Swedish), *Bobřek* (Czech), *Bocks boonen* (Dutch), Bog hop, Bog myrtle, Bog nut, Bog trefoil, Brook bean, Buckbean, Bug bean, *Bukkeblad* (Danish), Common bogbean, Common buckbean, Dondlar, Doudlar, *Faive de douit* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Ffâr Corsydd* (Welsh), *Ffa'r Gors* (Welsh), *Fieberklee* (German), *Hořký jetel* (Czech), Marsh buckbean, Marsh claver, Marsh cleaver, Marsh clover, Marsh trefoil, *Ménianthe* (French), Moonflower, *Raate* (Finnish), *Scarfano* (Italian), *Sumpffieberklee* (German), *Su yoncasi* (Turkish), Threefold, *Trebol de agua* (Spanish), Treefold, *Trèfle d'eau* (French), *Trèfle des marais* (French), *Trèfl'ye dg'ieau* (Channel Islander-Jersey Norman-French), *Trefoglio d'acqua* (Italian), Trefoil, *Třilistník* (Czech), *Třirožka* (Czech), *Vachta třilistá* (Czech), *Vachta trojlistá* (Czech, Slovak), *Vattenklöver* (Swedish), *Vodní jetel* (Czech), *Waterdrieblad* (Dutch), Water shamrock, Water trefoil, and White fluff; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of calm repose.

Warning – large doses of the plant can cause diarrhoea and vomiting. The plant must not be used for the treatment of diarrhoea.

Trade demands for bogbean in Europe are such that it has been the subject of over harvesting and at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries its future survival is considered to be threatened.

*Trifoliata* is made up of Latin *tri-* (three) and *-folia* (leaved) components meaning 'with three leaves' with reference to the form of the leaves.

In Russia and Alaska the bogbean has been a source of food in times of shortage. It has been enjoyed by Laplanders, Icelanders, Alaskans and Inuits who have used the powdered root for making bread and have also eaten the boiled root as a vegetable. Norwegians, Scots and Swedes have added it to beer and its leaves were once used for baking and also for brewing tea. Today bogbean provides a basic ingredient used by the drinks industry in several bitter-based alcoholic drinks.

Authorities have noted how some North American Indian tribes have observed deer grazing on the underground stems – which would mean that they would have to put their heads below the surface of the water to reach them and would need to feel secure in their surroundings.

The plant yields a green dye.

A few North American tribes including the Micmac, Menominee and Tlingit Indians turned to bogbean as a source of medicine. While the Kwakiutl used it to increase weight, stem internal bleeding or ease stomach upsets, the Aleut Indians took it both as a tonic and a laxative, and also viewed it as a remedy for wind and rheumatism.

Medicinally, the Germans almost believed at one time that the bogbean was in effect a 'cure-all' and used it for the treatment of a wide range of complaints from gout and scurvy to neuralgia and rheumatism. Herbalists have recommended it for treating arthritis, scabies, jaundice, constipation, catarrh, feverish colds and fluid retention. Today it is believed to offer an alternative to yellow gentian (*Gentiana lutea*) or gentian (*Gentiana*) in remedies. It is still used for easing fever, for treating skin disorders and for some rheumatic ailments, and it is also taken as a digestive aid and an appetite stimulant.