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Mertensia maritima

[Synonyms : *Pneumaria maritima*, *Pulmonaria maritima*, *Stenhammaria maritima*]

NORTHERN SHORE-WORT is a semi-recumbent perennial. Native to northern temperate coastlines (including Britain) it has pink buds opening to tiny, pink turning clear blue flowers with protruding stamens.

It is also known as *Austernpflanze* (German), *Blauw klokje* (Dutch), Bluebells, Blue iris, *Fjärva* (Swedish), Gromwell, Iceplant, *Llysiâu'r Ysgyfaint Arfor* (Welsh), *Ostronört* (Swedish), Oysterleaf, Oyster plant, Sea bugloss, Seal flower, Sea lungwort, Sea mertensia, and Shorewort.

Northern shore-wort is a protected plant in the Irish Republic under the Flora Protection Order 1987, and in Northern Ireland under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. It is also considered to be threatened in the wild in Britain.

Maritima is Latin (of the sea) meaning 'coastal, or of the sea or seaside'.

The leafy stems and the roots have been eaten as food by the Alaskan Inuits.

Medicinally, it has been used by European herbalists to treat lung disorders (not least because of its white-spotted leaves that for those who subscribed to the Doctrine of Signatures so popular in Europe in the 16th Century had a suitably suggestive appearance).