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Molucella laevis

[Synonyms : *Molucella laevis*]

BELLS OF IRELAND is an annual. Native to the eastern Mediterranean it has white to pale lilac flowers.

It is also known as Irish bellflower, Irish bells, Irish green bells, *Kotilokukka* (Finnish), Molucca balm, *Molucela hladká* (Slovak), *Musselblomma* (Swedish), *Musselsysska* (Swedish), Needles and thread, Old maid's nightcap, and Shell-flower.

The flowers when just opening emit a strong fragrance if bruised.

Laevis is derived from Latin *laevis* (smooth) meaning 'smooth or polished'.

The annual is cultivated as an ornamental plant and is sometimes sought after by flower arrangers as the flower spikes can be dried for Winter decorations.