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*Parochetus communis*

[Synonyms : *Cosmiusa repens*, *Parochetus africanus*, *Parochetus maculata*, *Parochetus major*, *Parochetus oxalidifolius*]

**SHAMROCK PEA** is a prostrate, mat-forming evergreen perennial. Native to tropical eastern Africa and to the Himalayas it has small pea-like, (occasionally nearly white) pale or deep blue flowers.

It is also known as Blue flowering shamrock, Blue oxalis, Blue shamrock pea, Blue trefoil, Hemlock pea, and Himalayan clover.

The leaflets (with their irregular purplish-brown horseshoe-shaped markings) bend down and fold at night or in rough, windy weather. Some of the flowers stay closed and are self-pollinating.

*Communis* means 'common, general or growing with'.

Locally African children eat the clover-like leaves.

Shamrock pea has been cultivated in India as part of a crop rotation cycle to replenish nitrogen in the soil. It is also grown quite widely as an ornamental plant in hanging baskets, as ground cover or as a garden rock plant.