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Picris echioides

[Synonyms : *Helminthotheca echioides*, *Helminthia echioides*]

BRISTLY OXTONGUE is an annual or biennial. Native to the Mediterranean it has dandelion-like yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Draslavec hadincovity* (Czech), *Gwylaeth Chwerw* (Welsh), *Lyktfibbla* (Swedish), *Natternkopf-Bitterkraut* (German), *Oxtungsfibbla* (Swedish), *Picride échioïde* (French), *Ox-tongue*, *Stekel Picris* (Afrikaans), and *Wurmlattich* (German).

Echioides is made up of the genus name *Echium* and Greek *-oides* (like) components meaning 'like plants in that (viper's-bugloss) genus'.

The hooked prickles covering the plant have been known to catch unsuspecting insects eg. damselflies by their wings, beetles by their legs. The luckless insects if not freed remain trapped until they die.

The cooked leaves (boiling softens the bristles) used to be added as a flavouring to stews.