

*Pinguicula vulgaris*

[Synonyms : *Pinguicula arctica*, *Pinguicula gypsophila*, *Pinguicula norica*, *Pinguicula vulgaris* var. *americana*]

**COMMON BUTTERWORT** is a carnivorous perennial. Native to Europe (including Britain), to Asia (apart from the north-east) and to northern North America, it has bluish-violet flowers with a white blotched open mouth and small spur.

It is also known as *Almindelig Vibefedt* (Danish), Beanweed, *Blaues Fettkraut* (German), Bog-violet, *Butterkraut* (German), Butterplant, Butter-root, Butterwort, Clowns, Earning grass, Flycatcher, *Gemeines Fettblatt* (German), *Gemeines Fettkraut* (German), *Grassette* (French), Marsh violet, Rot-grass, Rots, Sheeprout, Sheep-rot, Sheepweed, Steepgrass, Steepweed, Steepwort, *Tätört* (Swedish), *Tettegras* (Norwegian), Thickening grass, *Toddyn Cyffredin* (Welsh), *Tučnice obečná* (Czech), Valentine's flower, *Vanlig tätört* (Swedish), White sinclis, *Yökönlehti* (Finnish), Yorkshire fog, and Yorkshire sanicle.

The leaves are rolled inwards at the edges and have sticky glands (160,000 to the square inch) that can dissolve and digest small insects.

Warning – the fresh plant can cause purging and vomiting.

*Vulgaris* means 'common'.

Common butterwort once attracted some superstition. It seems that Scottish Islanders in particular were reassured by the plant's alleged ability to provide protection from witches. Common butterwort was rubbed on cows' udders to guard milk and butter against evil and the cows themselves were bound to be safe from elfin-arrows if they had been feeding on the plant.

In Lapland the plant has long been used to make a kind of junket by pouring milk over the leaves. It was used similarly (as an alternative to rennet) to curdle milk for cheese-making in northern England.

For the North American Oweekeno Indians the dried roots were a treasured good luck charm. Medicinally, common butterwort is used today in homoeopathic treatments.