

You are viewing one of thousands of biographies – click below for more, including Search box and access to Plant associated organisations.

[Plant Biographies](#)

[Bibliography](#)

Polemonium caeruleum

[Synonyms : *Polemonium caeruleum* var. *album*, *Polemonium sibiricum*, *Polemonium yezoense*]

JACOB’S-LADDER is a perennial. Native to Asia and Europe (including Britain) it has small chalice-shaped, purplish-blue (occasionally white) flowers.

It is also known as *Blågull* (Swedish), *Blaues Sperrkraut* (German), Blue jacket, Charity, Charity valerian, English greek valerian, Greek valerian, *Himmelsleiter* (German), *Jacobs ladder* (Dutch), Jacob’s walking-stick, *Jakobsleiter* (German), *Jirnice modrá* (Czech), Joseph’s walking stick, Ladder to heaven, *Lehtosinilatva* (Finnish), *Polémonie bleue* (French), *Polemonio* (Italian), Poverty, *Scala di Giacobbe* (Italian), *Sperrkraut* (German), *Spierkruid* (Dutch), *Valeriana azzura* (Italian), *Valeriana greca* (Italian), *Valériane greque* (French), *Vojnovka modrá* (Slovak), *Ysgol Jacob* (Welsh), and *Yunan kedi otu* (Turkish); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of ‘come down’, and rupture.

In Britain jacob’s-ladder is considered endangered in the wild.

Caeruleum is derived from Latin *caerulei-* (dark blue) meaning ‘dark blue or sky blue’.

The common name Jacob’s-ladder describes the visual effect of the successive rung-like pairing of leaves.

Authorities note that jacob’s-ladder has flourished in Britain for 10,000 years from the late glacial period.

As with common valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) cats love the smell of it and the plant will be found broken and bruised as they will often roll in it.

Medicinally, it was believed to have blood-purifying attributes and taken in wine the root was used in the treatment of epilepsy, tuberculosis, dysentery, toothache, headaches, nervous disorders and snake bites. At the beginning of the 19th Century herbalists also prescribed it for treating rabies. Today however it has little medicinal use.