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Potentilla reptans

CREeping CINQUEFOIL is an invasive, creeping perennial. Native to Asia and Europe (including Britain) it has small bright yellow flowers with many stamens.

It is also known as *Cinco em rama* (Portuguese), *Cinco en rama* (Spanish), *Cinquefoglio* (Italian), Cinquefoil, *Coig-bhileach* (Scots Gaelic), Common cinquefoil, *Coig-bhileach* (Scots Gaelic), Creeping jenny, Cynkfoly, European five-finger grass, Five-finger blossom, Five-finger grass, Five fingers, Five-leaf grass, Five-leaved grass, Five leaves, *Frawli salvaggi* (Maltese), *Fünffingerkraut* (German), Golden blossom, *Kriechendes Fingerkraut* (German), *Kriechendes Fünffingerkraut* (German), *Krybende Potentil* (Danish), Mary's five fingers, *Mochna plazivá* (Czech), *Nátržník plazivý* (Slovak), *Pentafillo* (Italian), *Pié de Cristo* (Spanish), *Potentila* (Portuguese), *Potentille rampante* (French), *Pumdalen Ymlusgol* (Welsh), *Quintefeuille* (French), *Revfingerört* (Swedish), St. Anthony's turnip, Sinkfield, *Suikerohanhikki* (Finnish), *Suikertava hanhikki* (Finnish), Sunkfield, Synkefoyle, Trailing tormentil, *Vijfvingerkruid* (Dutch), and Wood cinquefoil; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of maternal affection.

The flowers close partially in dull weather and close completely at night.

Reptans is derived from Latin *repto* meaning 'creeping, crawling'.

Creeping cinquefoil is known as the emblem of the dead. In the past the juice of the plant was said to have been used in a witch's flying ointment together with some gruesome ingredients. At the same time creeping cinquefoil was believed to be able to ward off witches' spells and evil spirits (it often featured in May Day garlands) – and it also played a role in love divinations.

In heraldry creeping cinquefoil is a symbol of hope and of joy, as well as of the five senses.

The leaves can sometimes be found in English carvings – not least in the 1330 Chapter-house in Southwell near Newark.

It was used as one of the constituents of fishermen's bait as this was believed to ensure a heavy catch.

Today creeping cinquefoil can be used by the cosmetics industry as an ingredient in anti-wrinkle preparations.

Apparently Manx cats are particularly susceptible to diarrhoea and a decoction of the roots has been used to counter this.

Medicinally, herbalists recommended the root's use internally for curing intermittent fevers, and externally for the treatment of bleeding wounds, inflammation, sciatica and gout. The juice or a decoction of the plant was used for treating ulcers, cancers, jaundice, toothache and oral sores. Today it is still used generally as an infusion of the dried plant for treating diarrhoea and externally as an astringent lotion or gargle.

It is the birthday flower for 13th April.