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Pulicaria dysenterica

[Synonyms : *Inula dysenterica*]

COMMON FLEABANE is a perennial. Native to Europe it has bright yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Blešník úplavičný* (Czech), *Camels*, *Cedowydd* (Welsh), *Coumaire* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Coummère* (Channel Islander-Jersey Norman-French), Fleabane, Harvest flower, Job's tears, Mare's fat, Meadow false fleabane, Middle fleabane, Pig daisy, *Rarajeub* (Arabic), *Strandkrissla* (Swedish), *Strandloppört* (Swedish), and Wild marigold.

Dysenterica is derived from Greek *dys-* (bad, ill) and *entero-* (gut) components meaning 'of dysentery'.

Burning common fleabane will drive away fleas and other insects thus explaining the reasoning behind some of its common names. The Arabs have a tradition that Job (whose books appear in the Old Testament of the *Bible*) used a decoction of common fleabane to cure his ulcers. They thus christened the plant Job's tears *Rarajeub*.

When Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778) the Swedish naturalist and physician, published his *Flora Suecica* and *Fauna Suecica* in 1745 in the former he notes that he heard a relevant tale from a Russian General. During the Russo-Persian War of 1722-23 the General's men who were taking part in one of the expeditions against Persia (now Iran) came down with dysentery – and common fleabane provided an effective cure.

In some parts of Britain the plant was believed to be able to give protection from evil and for this reason it could be found hanging over house entrances.

Medicinally, it is understood that from known records the plant seems to have had little interest for British herbalists although it had a stronger following in continental Europe.