

*Pulmonaria officinalis*

[Synonyms : *Pulmonaria maculata*, *Pulmonaria officinalis* subsp. *maculosa*]

**LUNGWORT** is a perennial. Native to parts of Europe it has small pink turning to violet or blue flowers.

It is also known as Abraham Isaac and Jacob, Adam and Eve, Bedlam cowslip, Beggar's basket, Bethlehem sage, Bloody butcher, Bottle-of-all-sorts, Bugloss, Children of Israel, Common lungwort, Cowslip-of-Jerusalem, *Echtes Lungenkraut* (German), *Fläckbladig lungört* (Swedish), *Fläcklungört* (Swedish), *Geflecktes Lungenkraut* (German), Good Friday plant, *Herbe au coeur* (French), Hundreds and thousands, *Hvězdoš* (Czech), Jacob's coat, Jerusalem cowslip, Jerusalem sage, Jerusalem seeds, Joseph and Mary, Josephs and Maries, *Korálky* (Czech), Lady's cowslip, Lady Mary's tears, Lady's milk, Lady's milk-sile, Lady's pincushion, *Llys yr Ysgyfaint* (Welsh), *Lungört* (Swedish), Lungwort herb, Maple lungwort, Mary's honeysuckle, Mary's milk drops, Mary-spilt-the-milk, Mary's tears, Mountain sage, *Nevlastní sestry* (Czech), Our Lady's smile, *Pličník* (Czech), *Plicník lékařský* (Czech), *Plicník lékařský skvrnitý* (Czech), *Plucník* (Czech), *Plucnik lekársky* (Slovak), *Pulmonaire officinale* (French), Pulmonaria, *Pulmonario oficina* (Esperanto), *Rohtoimikkä* (Finnish), Sage of Jerusalem, *Skånsk lungört* (Swedish), Soldier and his wife, Soldiers and sailors, Spotted comfrey, Spotted cowslip, Spotted dog, Spotted lungwort, Spotted Mary, Spotted Virgin, Thunder and lightning, Virginia cowslip, Virgin Mary, Virgin Mary's cowslip, Virgin Mary's honeysuckle, Virgin Mary's milkdrops, Virgin Mary's tears, and *Vitfläckig lungört* (Swedish).

*Officinalis* means 'of the shop (usually the apothecary's or herbalist's)'. Certain plants used for medicinal purposes, whether of actual or legendary value, were kept readily available and acquired this name.

The double names such as Adam and Eve are said to reflect the varying colouring of the flowers on the same plant as they move through stages from pink to blue. Some of the other names reflect Christian lore (subscribed to widely in European countries) by suggesting that the leaves were silvery-spotted with the Virgin Mary's tears or drops of milk.

In the past apart from medicinal uses the leaves were cooked as a flavouring. Today lungwort is used by the drinks industry as an ingredient in vermouth for example.

The dogma of the Doctrine of Signatures (which had a following in the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century and completely independently was often reflected in North American Indian plant lore) led herbalists to perceive an alleged resemblance between the white-spotted oval leaves and the human lung. From this it was concluded that the leaves were suitable medicine for lung disorders. Co-incidentally the plant does have some part to play in the treatment of respiratory ailments in addition to other unrelated disorders although not as significant a role as its 16<sup>th</sup> Century reputation would imply. Today an essence is used in some homoeopathic treatments.