

Scabiosa columbaria

[Synonyms : *Scabiosa anthemifolia*, *Scabiosa austroafricana*, *Scabiosa banatica*]

SMALL SCABIOUS is a biennial or perennial. Native to northern Europe and Africa (including Zimbabwe and South Africa), it has dark purplish-centred lilac-blue flowers. It is also known as *Bitterbos* (Afrikaans), *Clafrllys Bychan* (Welsh), *Colombaire* (French), Dove pincushions, *Due-Skabiose* (Danish), *Duifkruid* (Dutch), *Fältvädd* (Swedish), *Hlaváč fialový* (Czech), Lesser scabious, Morning bride, *Pisgoedbossie* (Afrikaans), Rice flower, *Tauben-Skabiose* (German), and Wild scabious; and in flower language it is said to be a symbol of ‘I have lost all’.

Columbaria is derived from Latin *columba* (dove, pigeon) meaning ‘dove-like or of doves’. Small scabious has similar medicinal properties to those of field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*). In Africa the Sotho tribe have used it to treat sterility and venereal sores.

Medicinally, as with the field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*) herbalists recommended small scabious for an internal tonic and used it in the treatment of various lung disorders. They also applied it externally as a remedy for many different skin disorders, including carbuncles, wounds, sores and ulcers. The juice was an ingredient in a mixture used for treating leprosy, dandruff, freckles and pimples.