

Solidago virgaurea

[Synonyms : *Solidago cambrica*, *Solidago multiradiata*]

GOLDENROD is a perennial. Native to Asia, North Africa and Europe (including Britain), it has small golden-yellow flowers.

It is also known as Aaron's rod, Cast-the-spear, *Celík zlatobýl* (Czech), *Celník* (Czech), *Echte Goldrute* (German), *Erba giudaica* (Italian), European goldenrod, *Eurwialen* (Welsh), Farewell summer, *Gewöhnliche Goldrute* (German), Golden wings, *Goldrute* (German), *Gullris* (Norwegian, Swedish), *Hadí traňk* (Czech), *Herbe des juifs* (French), *Kultapiisku* (Finnish), Mountain goldenrod, Solidago, *Solidago Eŭropa* (Esperanto), *Svalník* (Czech), *Verga aurea* (Italian), *Verga d'oro* (Italian), *Verge d'or* (French), *Vysoký traňk* (Czech), Wound-weed, Woundwort, Yellow rod, *Zlatobejl* (Czech), *Zlatobýl obecný* (Czech), and *Zlatobyl' obyčajná* (Slovak); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of encouragement, and precaution.

Warning – goldenrod is potentially poisonous.

Virgaurea is derived from an old name and means a 'golden twig or rod-like'.

For those Europeans who had faith in the supernatural goldenrod was believed to be able to guide the way to hidden treasures and springs of water. In contrast people in some parts of northern England believed it was unlucky not just inside the house but in the garden as well.

As yet it has not been identified clearly in very old records. References suggest that it was introduced to the Italians (and the Germans) in the Middle Ages by the Arabs. Its predominant value has been as it still is today in the treatment of wounds. (In 1949 it was noted that the Brazilians used a closely related plant similarly.)

In the past European herbalists used the plant to treat ulcers, kidney complaints, gout, rheumatism and wounds. Apparently this last helps to explain the reason for its demand and spiralling price in 16th Century Tudor Britain especially (when some supplies had to be imported). At that time goldenrod was an extremely popular medicament with herbalists who attended duels or ministered to those caught up in drunken brawls. Goldenrod has also featured in Chinese medicine – and some of the North American Cree Indian tribe took the plant as a tonic. More recently goldenrod has been used in remedies for hay fever, persistent colds and tuberculosis. Today goldenrod is used in proprietary medicines, and fresh flowers are used in homoeopathic treatments.

It is the birthday flower for 30th November.