

Veronica chamaedrys

[Synonyms : *Veronica schmidtii*]

GERMANDER SPEEDWELL is a perennial. Native to Asia and Europe it has small, white eyed, bright blue flowers with darker lines, and pale and pearly beneath.

It is also known as Angels' eyes, Billy bright eye, Birds-eye, Birds-eye speedwell, Blewert, Blind flower, Blue bird's eye, Blue eyes, Blue speedwell, Blue star, Blue wort, Bobby's eyes, Bonny bird-ee, Botherum, Break-asin, Bright eye, Cat's eye, Deil's flower, Devil's eyes, Dotherum, *Ehrenpreis* (German), Eyebright, Eye of Christ, Eye of the child Jesus, Farewell, Fluellin the male, Forget-me-not, *Gamander-Ehrenpreis* (German), Germander chickweed, God's eye, Good-bye, Hawk-your-mother's-eyes-out, *Herbe terrée* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), Jerrymander, Lady's thimble, Lark's eye, *Llygad Doli* (Welsh), *Llysiau Llewelyn* (Welsh), Love-me-not, Milkmaid's eye, Mother-breaks-her-heart, *Nurmitädyke* (Finnish), Paul's betony, Pick-your-mother's-eyes-out, Poor man's tea, Remember me, *Rozrazil rezekvitek* (Czech), St. Paul's betony, Strike-fire, *Te-ärenpris* (Swedish), Tear-your-mother's-eyes-out, *Tèrrêtre* (Channel Islander-Jersey Norman-French), *Teveronika* (Swedish), *Tveskægget Ærenpris* (Danish), *Veronika obyčajná* (Slovak), *Véronique petit chène* (French), and Wish-me-well; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of facility, and womanly fidelity.

The flowers (which are particularly pollinated by bees and flies) close in rainy weather and at night.

Chamaedrys is derived from Greek *chamae*- (dwarf, on the ground, low-growing) and *drys* (oak) components with reference to the shape of the leaves.

Several European superstitions attached themselves to germander speedwell. A particularly gruesome English one contends that if a child picks the flower its mother would die within the year or that birds would peck its eyes out. On the other hand the Germans believed that a plucked flower would bring a storm. For the Irish accidents on journeys were avoided if the plant was sewn into one's clothing.

Medicinally, the plant was almost considered to be a panacea during one period. European herbalists have recommended it for treating fevers, smallpox, measles, cancer, asthma, jaundice and coughs, and have used it externally as a remedy for some skin diseases, itching and wounds.