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Veronica officinalis

HEATH SPEEDWELL is a mat-forming perennial. Native to northern temperate areas (including Asia, Europe and North America) it has tiny pale blue, violet-streaked flowers. It is also known as *Ärenpris* (Swedish), Bird's eye, Cat's eye, Common gypsyweed, Common medicinal tea, Common speedwell, Drug speedwell, *Echter Ehrenpreis* (German), *Ehrenpreis* (German), Fluellen, Fluellin, Gipsyweed, Ground hale, Ground heel, Groundhele, Gypsyweed, Gypsywort weed, *Hušec* (Czech), Low speedwell, Male fluellin, Paul's betony, *Přítřník* (Czech), *Rhwyddlwyn Meddygol* (Welsh), *Rohtotädyke* (Finnish), *Rozrazil lékařský* (Czech), Speedwell, *Tè svizzero* (Italian), *Thé d'Europe* (French), *Tržník* (Czech), *Úložník* (Czech), Upland speedwell, Veronica (English, Italian, Spanish), *Veronika* (Czech), *Veronika lekárska* (Slovak), *Veroniko oficina* (Esperanto), *Véronique officinale* (French), and *Wald-Ehrenpreis* (German); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of female fidelity, and fidelity.

The flowers are pollinated by bees and flies.

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.

Some say the common name Speedwell emerged because the flower dies quickly once it is picked.

As early as the mid-18th Century heath speedwell gained increasing popularity as a substitute for a tea which was christened by the French *thé d'Europe*.

In North America the Iroquois Indians gave a plant infusion to their cows to encourage the flow of milk, and they also took a plant decoction themselves to counter the effects of witchcraft. For one or two Indian tribes however the plant was a source of human medicine. The Cherokee for example used it to ease childbirth and to treat fever, coughs and earache – and they used it in a poultice as a remedy for boils as well.

Heath speedwell's reputation for healing led to its formal recognition as a medicinal plant by Middle Age European herbalists. Until about the mid-19th Century it was used not only for treating different skin ailments but also for stomach and respiratory disorders generally, coughs, colds, diarrhoea, rheumatism and gout. Today heath speedwell can be used in homoeopathy.