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### *Vicia sativa*

[Synonyms : *Vicia alba*, *Vicia angustifolia*, *Vicia bacla*, *Vicia bobartii*, *Vicia canadensis*, *Vicia communis*, *Vicia cordata*, *Vicia cosentini*, *Vicia cuneata*, *Vicia erythosperma*, *Vicia glabra*, *Vicia globosa*, *Vicia incisa*, *Vicia intermedia*, *Vicia leucosperma*, *Vicia macrocarpa*, *Vicia maculata*, *Vicia melanosperma*, *Vicia morisiana*, *Vicia nemoralis*, *Vicia notota*, *Vicia pallida*, *Vicia pimpinelloides*, *Vicia sativa* var. *nigra*, *Vicia sativa* subsp. *obovata*, *Vicia sativa* subsp. *sativa*, *Vicia subterranea*, *Vicia vulgaris*]

**COMMON VETCH** is an annual to perennial. Native to Europe it has small, pea-like, pale purple (occasionally white) flowers.

It is also known as *Alverja* (Spanish), *Ankra* (Hindi), Common tare, *Ervilhaca* (Portuguese), Fatches, Fetches, *Fflugbysen Faethol* (Welsh), Fitchacks, Fitches, *Fodervicker* (Swedish), *Futter-Wicke* (German), Garden vetch, *Gewöhnliche Breitblättrige Wicke* (German), *Gilbiena sewda* (Maltese), Gipsy-peas, Lintels, Lints, Narrowleaf vetch, Pebble vetch, *Poisette* (French), *Rehuvirna* (Finnish), *Saat-Wicke* (German), *Schmalblättrige Wicke* (German), Spring vetch, Tare, Tar-vetch, Twaddgers, Vatch, *Veccia buona* (Italian), *Vèche* (Channel Islander-Jersey Norman-French), *Vesce commune* (French), *Veza* (Spanish), Vetch, *Vicheron* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Vikev setá* (Czech), *Wicke* (German), and Wild fitch; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of shyness

Warning – the whole plant is potentially poisonous for some animals. It may cause photosensitivity and symptoms similar to those for lathyrism.

*Sativa* means ‘cultivated’.

Believed by some to have been introduced to Britain by the Romans common vetch was primarily a fodder crop. It has also been grown as green manure and today is cultivated for animal feed.

Today in northern India the whole plant is cooked and eaten as a vegetable and it is also dried for later use.

Medicinally, a decoction of the seed has been used locally to treat smallpox and measles. It is the birthday flower for 13<sup>th</sup> August.