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Viola x wittrockiana

[Synonyms : *Viola hortensis*, *Viola tricolor* var. *hortensis*, *Viola x williamsii*]

PANSY is a perennial (usually grown as an annual or biennial). It has small unscented flowers in various colours.

It is also known as Call-me-to-you, Garden pansy, Heartsease, Herb constancy, Kiss-her-in-the-buttery, Kit-runabout, Ladies'-delight, Love-in-idleness, Love-lies-bleeding, *Pensé* (Swedish), *Pensée* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Penséer* (Swedish), Pink-of-my-John, Stepmother's flower, and Wild pansy; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of love, modesty, pleasant thoughts, 'think of me', and 'you occupy my thoughts'.

The flowers which can be in various colours will droop at night or in wet weather.

Pansy has a similar appearance to wild pansy (*Viola tricolor*) but the latter has much smaller flowers.

Wittrockiana commemorates a Swedish botanist, Professor Veit Brecher Wittrock (1839-1914), who was professor of botany at Stockholm and Director of the Bergius Botanical Garden. In 1896 he recorded a history of the plant.

Apart from associations with the mulberry (*Morus nigra*) the famous English bard, William Shakespeare (1564-1616) also seems to be connected with pansies. This with daffodils (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) and rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) features in the buttonholes and posies devotees carry during the annual Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations at Stratford-upon-Avon.

To dream of the pansy is said to indicate contentment.

It is the birthday flower for 4th February.