



## LUNGWORT

Latin: *Pulmonaria officinalis*

Welsh: Llys yr Ysgyfaint

Lungwort, with its downy mottled leaves and bell-shaped flowers, appears in early spring. It is a member of the borage family.

Lungwort derives its name from the white spots on its leaves thought to resemble diseased patches on lungs (Latin: *pulmo*).

The **Doctrine of Signatures**, promoted in C16th, held that all plants must be associated, by appearance, smell or habit, with the disease they were used to treat. So, Lungwort was thought to be efficacious in the treatment of lung diseases.

Other names for the plant include Jerusalem Cowslip, Jerusalem Sage, Beggar's Basket and Bottle of Allsorts.

It has also been called Virgin Mary's Tears and Virgin Mary's Milkdrops, the white blotches on the leaves attributed to the tears or milk of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This association has overtones of gentleness.

One of the constituents of Lungwort is silica, and the plant has been found useful as a soothing remedy for coughs and as an expectorant in the treatment of bronchial catarrh.

Lungwort also contains tannins which help to stem bleeding, so making the plant a useful remedy for healing cuts and wounds, burns, scalds, sores and ulcers. Lungwort has also been used to treat diarrhoea, haemorrhoids and some gastro-intestinal problems.

The leaves of Lungwort were once used as a pot herb, and young leaves can be added to salads.