



MULLEIN

Latin: *Verbascum thapsis*

Welsh: Pannog Melyn

One of the supposed magical herbs of the ancients since the time of the ancient Greeks, Mullein was used to protect against infection, evil spirits and witches.

According to legend, Ulysses protected himself against the sorceress Circe by using Mullein (Circe turned the members of his ship's crew into pigs!).

In Roman times the dried stems of the plant were dipped in tallow to make tapers which were used especially in funeral processions. Tapers have continued to be made in this way over the centuries.

Roman women used the yellow flowers of Mullein to colour their hair. The name Mullein derives from the Latin *mollis* (soft).

In medieval times the soft, downy leaves of the plant were used by country people to line shoes to keep the feet warm.

The plant has a variety of common names including Aaron's Rod and, because of its downy leaves, Donkey's Ears, Bunny's Ears and Bull's Ears.

In Elizabethan times the leaves were carried to ward off epileptic attacks; and water distilled from the flowers was used to treat gout.

Mullein was once widely cultivated in Ireland as a treatment for TB.