

Common Name: **Heartsease**

Genus: *Viola*

Species: *tricolor*

Family: *Violaceae*

AKA: Heart's Ease, Heart's Delight, Three Colored Violet, Love-Lies-Bleeding, Wild Pansy, Live-in-Idleness, Loving Idol, Cull Me, Cuddle Me, Call-Me-to-You, Jackjump-Up-and Kiss-Me, Meet-Me-in-the-Entry, Kiss-Her-in-the-Buttery, Kit-Run-in-the-Fields, Pink-o'-the-Eye, Kit-Run-About, Godfathers and Godmothers, Stepmother, Herb Trinitatis, Herb Constancy, Pink-Eyed-John, Bouncing Bet, Flower O'luce, Bird's Eye, Bullweed, Tickle-My-Fancy, Jack-Jump-Up-and-Kiss-Me, Come-and-Cuddle-Me, Three Faces in a Hood, or Love-in-Idleness. Banwort, Banewort (Anglo-Saxon)



## Historical Uses: (Place icons

### Medical:

“It hath a cooling faculty, so that ye leaves being laid on by themselves and with Polenta do help a burning stomach, and ye inflammations of ye eyes, and the falling down of ye seat. And they say that ye purple part of ye flower, being drank with water doth help ye Synanchicall and Epilepsies that are upon children.” (1)

“It is good, as the later Physicians write, for such as are sicke of an ague, especially children and infants, whose convulsions and fits of the falling sicknesse it is thought to cure. It is commended against inflammations of the lungs and chest, and against scabs and itchings, of the whole body, and healeth ulcers. The distilled water of the herbe or floures given to drinke for ten or more days together, three ounces in the morning, and like quantitie at night, doth wonderfully ease the paines of the French disease, cureth the same, if the patient be caused to sweat sundry times, as *Costeus* reporteth, in his booke *de natura Vniuers. Stirp.*” (2)



“Violet is between warm and cold. But nevertheless, it is cold and grows from the air, clearly sometimes after winter air first begins to warm up. It is useful for cloudy eyes. Take good oil and make it hot either in the sun or in a fire in a new pot. When the oil is hot, stir in violets so that it is thickened. Place this in a glass vessel and save it. At night put this oil around the eyelids and eyes, but do not let it touch the eye itself; the cloudiness will flee the eyes. And let whoever is oppressed through melancholy with a sad mind and is thus harmed in his or her breathing cook violets in pure wine, strain



through a piece of cloth , add galingale to this wine, and thus make a healing drink. Let the person drink this, and it checks the melancholy. This makes a person happy, and makes his or her breathing healthy.” (3)

**Folklore/Astrology:** “Although it is hot and dry in the third degree, the astrological herbalists assigned it to Saturn, a cold planet. It’s three colors in a single flower earned it the name herb trinity. It was also called

heartsease because it was used in love potions, but others say because it was medicinal treatment for heart ailments. To pick a pansy with dew upon it would cause the death of a loved one; if plucked on a fine day, it would bring rain.” (4)

**Other:** “The Romans drank violet-flavored wine and were criticized by Horace (65-8 BC) of spending more time growing violets than olives.” (5)

### Contemporary Uses:

**Parts Used:** Whole plant

**Medicinal:** “A bitter-sweet, cooling herb that is a laxative and diuretic, lowers fever, cleanses toxins, and reduces inflammation. It is also an expectorant, relieves pain and promotes healing. Internally for bronchitis, whooping cough, rheumatism, skin complaints, urinary complaints, capillary fragility, and autoimmune disease. Externally for itching skin complaints, and varicose ulcers.” (6)

**Culinary:** “Flowers are added as a garnish, or frozen in ice cubes for summer drinks.” (7)

**Area of Origin:** All of Europe except Portugal. (8)

**Physical description:** Upright with spreading stems, leaves deeply cut into rounded lobes.

**Plant type:** Can be annual, biennial or in some areas a perennial.



Close-up of the Heartsease flower

**Height:** To 12”

**Flower color:** Tri-colored, purple, white, yellow

**Flowering period:** Spring and summer

**Soil type/requirements:** Well drained moist, rich soil. (9)

**Hardiness zone:** USDA zone 4-9

**Sun requirements:** Full sun

**Propagation:** By seed or by plant division in spring or autumn.

---

## **Sources**

1. Dioscorides, Bk. 4, 122
2. Gerard, pg. 853-855
3. Von Bingen, pg. 96
4. Anderson, pg. 339-340
5. Bown, pg. 405
6. Ibid
7. Ibid
8. Anderson, pg. 339-340
9. Bown, pg. 405

## **Illustrations/Images:**

1. Gerard's Herbal      1633
2. PSUMG                2013
3. PSUMG                2013