

Common Name: **Lungwort**

Genus: *Pulmonaria*

Species: *officinalis*

Family: *Boraginaceae*

AKA: Spotted Cowslip of Jerusalem, Spotted Comfrey, Sage of Bethlehem



Historical Uses:

Medical: “It does not have much use, but nevertheless, let a person who has an inflamed lung so that he or she coughs and has difficulty in breathing, cook lungwort in wine and drink it often while fasting; the person will get healthy.” (1)

In Culpeper lungwort is referred to as a type of moss which grows on trees. It is used for lung diseases, coughs, wheezing, and shortness of breath. (2) This is most likely “Oak Lungs” or “Oak Moss”. (3)

“The roots are also thought to be good against the infirmities and ulcers of the lungs, and to be of like force with the great Comfrey.” (4)

Culinary: Gerard said it is used as a pot-herb. (5)

Ornamental: Interesting leaves and small showy flowers in spring.

Other: Recommended feeding leaves to sheep to make them fat and healthy.

Folklore/Astrology: Religious symbolism comes from the leaves and flowers. The leaves supposedly got their white spots when Mary’s tears fell on them during the Christ’s crucifixion. The small flowers have blue centers and red/pink margins. This is said to represent Mary’s eyes with the red/pink being from crying.



Contemporary Uses:

Medical: “Internally for coughs, bronchitis, asthma, mucus, hemorrhoids and diarrhea.

Can be combined with other herbs to treat coughs due to tuberculosis.

Externally it can be used to treat wounds and as an eye wash.” (6)

Culinary: Young leaves can be added to soups and salads.

Other: Extract is an ingredient of vermouth. (7)

Cautions: Can cause skin irritation and is an allergen.

Area of Origin: Europe
Physical description: w/ hairy stems and white spotted ovate leaves.
Plant type: Rhizomatous perennial
Height: To 10" tall
Flower color: Pink turning to blue
Flowering period: Spring
Soil type: Moist soil
Soil requirements: Moist soil including clay
Hardiness zone: USDA 3-9
Sun requirements: Sun or shade
Propagation: By division in spring immediately after flowering or in autumn. By root cuttings in mid-winter.
Other: Prone to powdery mildew in dry conditions.



Sources:

1. Von Bingen, p. 29-30
2. Culpeper, p. 85-86
3. Grieve, p. 502
4. Gerard, p. 808
5. Ibid
6. Bown, p. 336-337
7. Ibid

Illustrations/Images:

1. Gerard's Herbal 1633
2. PSUMG 2005
3. PSUMG 2005