



Common name Herb Robert or Stinking Robert Death-come-quickly, Bloodwort and Cuckoo's eye

Latin Name *Geranium robertianum*

Family Name Geraniaceae

Herb-Robert is a spindly plant about 10-50cms in height. As it is a geranium it is covered with silvery hairs, it has dark to bright green finely divided leaves and reddish-tinged stems. Although the five petals are usually bright pink, white forms arise in some areas. It flowers from May to December.



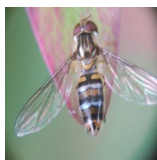
The name geranium comes from the Greek "geranus" meaning crane, so called because the seed heads resemble crane beaks and a lot of our native geraniums as known as Cranes Bills.

Herb Robert is common throughout Britain. It is shade loving and therefore is very happy in the woods at Healey Dell. It can either be an annual or biennial and flowers, between June to October. These are pollinated by a range of insects, however the flowers are able to self-fertilise if they are not pollinated.

As you can see from its local names, this plant smells when the leaves are crushed, but not very nicely of foxes!

In folklore it is the plant belonging to Robin Goodfellow (the name Robin is a shortened version of Robert) It is said in folk law that 'when red-stalked Herb Robert is in bloom, you should be careful how you treat it. For to wantonly destroy the flower, which is under the protection of Robin Goodfellow, the household protector who was also known as 'Puck', (derived from the Old English Pucelas, 'wild men of the woods'), is to court disaster. Treat the flower well and it will help you to staunch wounds; treat Robin well and he will help you with your housework. So was the belief of the country folk in the centuries up to and perhaps into the nineteenth century. . ' It is usual that flowers named Robin have associations with devils, death and fairies.

From <http://www.tellinghistory.co.uk/resources/mff.htm>



Hoverfly

What other animals use it

It is the food plant of bees, long-tongued hoverflies and the Barred Carpet moth.



Barred Carpet Moth

What it was used for in the past

Its other local names including bloodwort, shows that it was used in the past medicine to staunch blood flows. The leaves have been rubbed onto the skin in order to repel biting insects. The plant has been used to obtain a brown dye. While recent research has shown that the plant may lower blood sugar levels, and so it has potential as a treatment for diabetes.

Field Guides to Healey Dell
6. Plants in Early Summer Herb Robert



Sources

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