

Did You Know?



Heartsease, *Viola tricolor*

- Common names for *Viola tricolor* include heartsease, Johnny-jump-up, wild pansy, viola, heart's delight, Jack-jump-up-and-kiss-me, come-and-cuddle-me, love-in-idleness, and three faces in a hood.
- *Viola tricolor* is in the Violaceae family and while native to Europe, it has naturalized in the United States.
- The flowers can be combinations of two or three colors of purple, blue, yellow or white. They bloom in cooler spring weather, generally in partial shade.
- Taking advantage of this flower's natural tendency to hybridize, intentional cross-breeding among species in the viola family began in the 1800's. The first pansy hybrid was soon introduced in 1814.
- In the Victorian language of flowers, or floriography, heartsease meant "you occupy my thoughts". It was also viewed as a love charm. Wild pansies are also mentioned in Roman and Greek mythology.
- Heartsease appears in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and referred to as a pansy in *Hamlet* "There's pansies, that's for thoughts".
- The whole plant has a long history of both ornamental and medicinal use.
- Medicinal use included a rejuvenating tonic and treating epilepsy, skin diseases, as an expectorant for respiratory issues ranging from colds to bronchitis and asthma. It was traditionally used for rheumatism and cystitis due to its diuretic properties.
- The flowers have been used to make yellow, green and blue-green dyes. The leaves have been used to make a chemical indicator, indicating acidity.
- The flowers are edible and can be candied and added fresh to salads, desserts and other dishes. The leaves are also edible and can be added to fresh greens or soups.

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