

Family: BORAGINACEAE Genus: <i>Borago</i> Species: <i>officinalis</i> Cvs or ssp: most common are blue, pink & white flowered varieties. Blue is dominant.	Proper name: <i>Borago officinalis</i> Medievally known as: Bee's Bread Common Name: Borage, Bee Plant, Starflower
Average Size: 0.6 to 1m	Origin: Mediterranean area
Distinctive Features: leaves & stems are bristly or hairy all over. Leaves are alternate, simple 5-15cm long & elliptical. Tend to be deeply arcuate in venation. Flowers are in cymes, but droop with 5-petalled, stellate blooms.	Habit: erect herbaceous annual to semi-perennial Conservation status: common
Aspect: full sun but will tolerate a degree of shade	Soils: well-drained but moisture retentive, such as organic rich soils. It prefers pH 6.0 to 7.0 but will grow in well-drained alkaline soil. If grown in a container, it must be at least 25cm deep.
Pruning: only when dies back.	Pests & diseases: very few. Japanese beetles will attack if there is no other food source.
Usefulness: Is the highest known plant source of essential fatty acids such as gamma-linolenic acids & is a source of supplements. Traditional medical uses include gastro-intestinal, respiratory & cardio-vascular disorders. Very attractive to bees.	Propagation: happily from seed. Many beds remain self-seeding once planted. Plant seed after the last frost date in Spring when the soil has warmed. If started indoors it forms a taproot & does not like transplanting. Rootstock may be divided in spring.
Culinary use: fresh vegetable or a dried herb, when fresh it has a cucumber-like taste in salads or as a garnish. Flower is one of the only blue edible flowers & has a sweet honey-like taste. In Germany made into Grüne Soße (Green Sauce), In Liguria (Italy) it is a traditional filling for ravioli & pansoti, in Poland used in pickling. In Iran it is a herbal tea.	Special features: noted for long flowering season. In mild climates this can be year round. Often used in companion planting with tomatoes, legumes, spinach, brassica & strawberries.
Notes. Requires regular watering until established. Too much Nitrogen in soil will cause a failure to bloom. Harvest younger leaves. Used by the Romans in a Borage tea, often drunk with wine before battles. "Borage for courage".	Comments: In the 1st planting on 2/12/14. Both types of Borage attracted English Bumblebees & the European Honey Bee (<i>Apis mellifera</i>). The white Borage died off & was pulled out, however it reseeded with a number of green shoots coming through. In about May 2015 the Bumblebees went into hibernation whereas the other bees are still swarming the Blue Borage in June 2015, although they are expected to go into hibernation as the weather gets cooler. The Challenge is to see how long we can nurture the Blue Borage to continue & also to see if the White Borage is able to come back.

Photos: #1 <http://medicinalherbinfo.org/images/borage.jpg>, #2

<http://wordsandherbs.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/borage1.jpg>

