

Medieval Latin Religious Names of Plants

From "De Plantis A Divis Sanctisve Nomen Habentibus" by Johannis Bauhin, Basil, 1591

Bauhin documents the Marian and other religious names of plants with source quotes from botanical books in Latin, Gallic (French), German etc. - giving testimony that these names were widely found in medieval oral traditions as the then common names of these plants.

These religious names were written down by botanists in their field notes for each area studied, that other botanists would have the names by which to inquire of residents as to their location in future trips to the areas to collect herbarium specimens, etc. The botanical names, then not yet standardized, are listed as given by Bauhin as of the 16th century.

These and numerous other religiously named plants - from folklore as well as botanical sources - are listed, together with their now standardized botanical names, in contemporary works such as Marzell's *Deutsches Wörterbuch der Pflanzennamen* and Rolland's *Flore Populaire*; but the significance of Bauhin's book remains its definitive documentation, with extensive quotes from his references, of the medieval origins and widespread occurrence of religious plant names and symbolism.

Botanical Name	Common Name	Latin Religious Name	English Translation
<i>Absinthis</i>	Absinth	Sanctonicum Absinthium	Holy Absinth
<i>Absinthisi albis flor.</i>		S. Mariae fumus	Mary's Smoke
<i>Ageratum</i>	Ageratum	S. Mariae herba	Mary's Flower
<i>Angelica</i>	Angelica	Sancti Spiritus Radix	Holy Spirit Root
<i>Barbaria</i>	Barbaria	Sancta herba	Holy Herb
<i>Berberis</i>	Barberry	Sancta spina	Holy Thorn
<i>Cardiaca</i>		S. Mariae manus	Mary's Hand
<i>Cardus Marianus</i>	Mary's Thistle	S. Mariae lac	Mary's Milk
<i>Cardus Marianus</i>	Plumeles Thistl.	S. Mariae tribulus	Mary's (?)
<i>Cardua Benedictus</i>	Blessed Thistle	Sanctus Carduus	Blessed Thistle
<i>Carduus Marianus</i>	Plumeles Thistl.	S. Mariae cardus	Mary' Thistle
<i>Carduus marianus</i>	Mary's Thistle	Sanctae Crucis tribulus	Holy Cross
<i>Cariophyl lata</i>		S. Mariae claus	Mary's Shoes
<i>Chamaemelum aureum</i>		S. Mariae herba	Mary's Flower
<i>Colocasia</i>		S. Virginis chlamys	Virgin's Cape
<i>Damascenicum nothum</i>		S. Mariae calceolus	Mary's Shoe
<i>Digitalis</i>	Foxglove	S. Mariae chirothae	Mary's Gloves
<i>Galium</i>	Yellow Bedstraw	S. Mariae stramen	Mary's Bedstraw
<i>Gallitrichu fatium</i>		S. Mariae herba	Mary's Flower
<i>Glycypicros</i>		S. Mariae sigillum	Mary's Image
<i>Guaiacu</i>		Sanctum Lignum	Holy Wood
<i>Guaiacu</i>	Lignum-vitae	Sancta palma	Holy Palm
<i>Guaicu</i>	Lignum-vitae	Sancta arbor	Holy Tree
<i>Hypericon</i>	St. Johswort	S. Mariae stramen lecti	Mary's Bedstraw
<i>Iara multicolor</i>		Sanctae Trinitatis herba	Holy Triniy Herb
<i>Lachryma Jobi</i>	Job's Tears	S. Mariae lachryma	Mary's Tears
<i>Lignum Aloes</i>	Aloe Wood	S. Crucis lignum	Wood of the Cross
<i>Linaria</i>	Toadflax	S. Mariae linum	Mary's Flax
<i>Linaria</i>	Toadflax	S. Virginis linum	Virgin's Flax
<i>Lotus Vrbana Matthioli</i>	Birdsfoot tref.	S. Mariae calceoli	Mary's Shoes
<i>Macer</i>		Sancta arbor	Holy Tree
<i>Matricaria</i>	Matricary	S. Mariae herba	Mary's Flower
<i>Medica</i>	Alfalfa	Sanctum Foenum	Holy Hay
<i>Melilotus</i>	Clover	S. Mariae calceoli	Mary's Shoes
<i>Mentha Sarracenic</i>	Mint	S. Mariae herba	Mary's Herb
<i>Mentha Sarracenic</i>	Mint	S. Mariae mentha	Mary's Mint
<i>Mentha spicata</i>	Spearmint	S. Mariae herba	Mary's Herb
<i>Metha sarracenic</i>	Mint	S. Virginis mentha	Virgin's Mint
<i>Millefoliu Alpinu Ioan</i>		S. Mariae fumus	Mary's Smoke
<i>Narcissus flore pureo</i>	Narcissus	S. Mariae lilia	Mary's Lily

<i>Narcissus medio...</i>	Narcissus	S. Virginis lilia	Virgin's Lily
<i>Nardus Celtica</i>		S. Mariae flores	Mary's Flower
<i>Nicocians</i>	Nicotine	S. Crucis herba	Herb of the Cross
<i>Nicotiana</i>	Nicotine	Sancta herba	Holy Herb
<i>Parietaria</i>		Herbe S. Mariae	Mary's Flower
<i>Perasites</i>		S. Virginis chlamys	Virgin's Cape
<i>Persicaria aris</i>		S. Mariae Herba	Mary's Flower
<i>Persicaria</i>		S. Mariae Herbam	Mary's Flower
<i>Planta...Alchimilla</i>	Ladys Mantle	S. Mariae pallium	Mary's Mantle
<i>Polygonatum</i>	Solomon's Seal	S. Mariae sigillum	Mary's Image
<i>Pulmonaria</i>	Lungwort	S. Mariae lac	Mary's Milk
<i>Pyra</i>		S. Mariae pyra	Mary's Pire
<i>Quercus</i>	Oak	S. Crucis lignum	Wood of the Cross
<i>Rosa hierichuntera</i>	Rose	S. Mariae Rosa	Mary's Rose
<i>Rosmarinus</i>	Rosemary	S. Mariae arbor	Mary's Tree
<i>Satyrrium maculatum</i>		S. Mariae lachryma	Mary's Tears
<i>Seme lum bricorum</i>		Sanctum semen	Holy Shoot
<i>Senetio</i>	Ragwort	S. Mariae stramen lecti	Mary's Bedstraw
<i>Serpillium</i>		S. Mariae stramen lecti	Mary's Bedstraw
<i>Sorbus alpina</i>	Service Tree	S. Mariae pyra parua	Mary's Little Pire
<i>Testiculus vupinus</i>		S. Mariae lachryma	Mary's Tears
<i>Villeum</i>		S. Crucis lignum	Wood of the Cross
<i>Vitus nigra Matthioli</i>	Stock	S. Mariae sigillum	Mary's Image

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In addition to the above, Bauhin lists plants associated by name with Saints Anthony, Barbara, Benedict, Catherine, Christopher, Clare, Francis, George, Helena, John The Baptist, Mary Magdalene, Martha, Martin, Nicolas, Paul, Philip, Peter, Simon, Stephen, Thomas, Valentine - the associations evidently being of plants in bloom at the times of the respective feastdays in the Church's liturgical calendar of saints especially venerated in the various areas.