# Primary Source Descriptions of Plants in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Source: Dodoens, Rembert, *A New Herball, or Historie of Plants: Wherein is contained the whole discourse and perfect description of all sorts of Herbes and Plants*. London: Ninian Newton, 1586.

**Cowslip Pansy (Heartsease or Love-in-Idleness)**
Of Love in idlenes or hartes ease:
Pances hath triangled stemmes with many joynts, bringing forth fayze of pleasant floures.. each floure being of three diverse colours. These floures boyled and dronken, do cure and stay the beginnings of the falling evill or the disease of young children that foome and cast up froth. The same floures boyled with their herbe or plante, and given to be dronken, doth clense the lunges and breast, and are very good for fevers, and inward inflammations or heates.
Homework: Read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1.161-192 and 5.1.341-364

**Eglantine**
Of Eglentine of sweet brier:
The Eglentine may be also counted of the kindes of roses, for it is like to the wilde rose plante, in sharpe and cruel shutes, springes, and rough branches. The juyce of Roses, especially of them that are reddist, or the infusion of decoction of them is the kinde of soft and gentle medicines, whiche soose and ope the belly, and may be taken without danger. It purgeth downewarde cholerique humours, and openeth the stoppinges of the liver.
Homework: Read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1.254-276

**Musk Rose (Trailing Rose)**
Of Muske roses:
Muske roses hath slender springes and shutes, leaves and flowers be smaller than the other roses. The juice of roses may be taken without danger. It purgeth downwarde cholerique humours, and openeth the stoppinges of the liver, strengthening and clensing the same. It is lykewise good to be layd to the inflammation of the eyes, and al other hoate infirmities and specially agaynst St. Antonies fier or wilde fire.
Homework: Read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.2.1-8 and 2.1.254-276

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**Primrose and Oxlip**
Of Petie Mulleyn or Primeroses:
The Oxelip, or the small kinde of white Mulleyn, is very like to the Cowslippe saving that his leaves be greater and larger and his floures be of a pale or faynt yellow colour, almost white. The Prymerose whiche is the very least and smallest Mulleyn hath small whitishe or yellowish greene leaves in all partes like to the leaves of Oxelippe. Cowslippes, Oxelippes, and Prymeroses grow in lowe moyst wooddes. These are now used dayly amongst other pot herbes, but in Physicke there is no great accompt made of them. They are good for the head and synewes, and have other good vertues.
Homework: Read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 1.1.219-226

**Violet**
Of Marche Violets:
The garden violets are of a fayze darke of shining deepe blewe colour and a very pleasant and amiable smell. The decoction of violets is good against hoate fevers, and the inflammation of the liver, and all other inwarde partes, driving forth by siege the hoate and cholerique humors.
Homework: Read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1.254-276

**Wild Thyme**
Of Wild Time:
Running time floureth from after May, untill the end of sommer. Running time mingled with vinegar and oile of roses, and applyed to the forehead and temples, wageth headach, and is very good against raving and frensie.
Homework: Read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1.254-276

**Woodbine (Honeysuckle)**
Of Woodbine or Honysuckle:
Woodbine hath many small branches whereby it windeth and rappeth it selfe about trees and hedges. The fruit of honysuckle dronken in wine by the space of fourtie dayes, doth heale the stopping and hardnesse of the splene and purgeth by urine the corrupt humours, so strongly that it will cause the urine to be red and blooddy.
Homework: Read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1.254-276 and 4.1.41-46

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