

Lotus Maritimus

Related Ingredient: HYDROFILTRAT MARINE LOTUS G

Lotus comes from *lôtos*, name given by the Greeks to varied legumes seeked by herds, as the lotus plants. *Maritimus* means in Latin 'found growing on the coast'. *Lotus Maritimus* is also called Pea Lotus, Dragon's Teeth or Sea Birdsfoot Trefoil.

Synonyms: *Tetragonolobus maritimus*, *Tetragonolobus siliquosus*, *Winged Pea*, *Lotier Maritime*, *Lotier à gousses carrées* (French)



Source: [wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lotus_maritimus.jpg)

BOTANY

Botanical Family: Fabaceae

Lotus Maritimus is a small vigorous plant, from 10 cm to 40 cm high, with a woody tap root and a horizontal stem which then straightens up.

Its flowers are golden yellow, giving it the name “Golden Slipper”, or “Bride’s Slipper” in France. They are solitary, more rarely two. The corolla is 2,5 to 3 cm in dimensions, and is pale yellow. The calyx has a tubular structure, is sometimes streaked with red, and presents five narrow teeth.

The seeds are dark brown, wide and lenticular.

The leaves are green and trifoliate, and show at their base two large stipules. The leaflets are oval, broad and pointed at their end.

The fruits are pods with quadrangular section, 3 to 6 cm x 3 to 5 mm in dimensions, and winged at the corners (wings about 1 mm wide).

Flowering of *Lotus Maritimus* occurs from May to August.



Source: jeantosti.com



Source: farm4.staticflickr.com



Source: 3.bp.blogspot.com

BIOTOPE

Lotus Maritimus grows particularly in wet regions near the sea across all of Western Europe but it is also found inland, in marshy meadows and swamps, including in the mountains up to 1600m altitude.

This specie likes humid and salty environments, mainly calcareous and clay soils.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Lotus Maritimus is native of rocky to sandy soils in Central, Meridional and Western Europe. In Europe, it can be found:

- in France: this plant is present in almost entire France, including Corsica, but is better represented in the Eastern part, mainly for edaphic reasons (i.e. relating to soil).
- In South of Sweden, In Denmark, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Austria, Italy, Malta, Spain

This plant also grows in North of Africa: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

We can even find *Lotus Maritimus* in South-West Asia, for example Asiatic Turkey.

LEGENDS

Lotus Maritimus was taken to be the magic plant which made Ulysses' companions lose their memory in the Odyssey.

Indeed, after the fall of Troy, the Greek warriors did not come back together to their homeland. Ulysses and his companions first sailed to the coast of Thrace in the hope of getting supplies of food and water, but they had to face the hostility of local residents and could not land.

Then, they decided to sail, staying close to the coast, in order to shelter quickly in either creek when needed. But it was the wrong season, and violent winds dragged them offshore, so for several days they had to fight against terrible storms.

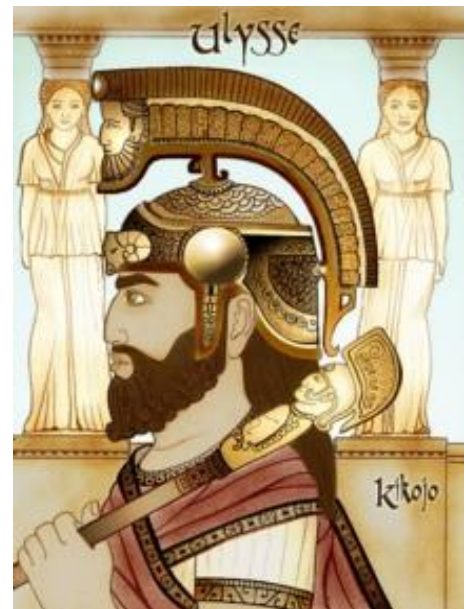
Ulysses' ship was separated from the rest of the fleet and soon neither he nor his crew knew where they were. Finally the winds subsided and the sea calmed ... Land was in sight!

It was the coast of Libya, the country of *Lotus* Eaters, and Ulysses decided to disembark there to get something to drink and eat. Although they might have been warned against this, some of his warriors wanted to taste the Lotus seed, magic bean that misled the minds of those who swallowed it, and made them lose their minds. Therefore, they lost any memory of the past. These men began to wander, not knowing where they came from, and not caring about anything but dreaming.

Ulysses, who feared that other people were also tempted, gathered the rest of his crew. They reloaded quickly and soon raised anchor.



Ulysses removing his men from the company of the lotus-eaters



Some also use the flowers of *Lotus Maritimus* as a sleeping draught.

It is said that neighbour of *Lotus Maritimus*, *Lotus Corniculatus* assists psychic powers and helps clairvoyance.

An ancient Swedish tradition says that young betrothed who put *Lotus* flowers under their pillows on Midsummer's Night will have revealed to them the face of their fiancé.



MEDICINAL USES

Lotus has calming properties, in the past it was given to reduce anxiety, nervousness and muscular spasms, and was used as sleeping pills.

Several species of *Lotus* produce tannins, which are a beneficial anti-bloating compound.

Lotus Maritimus is also an astringent plant, which has healing properties on wounds.

DIETARY USES

Leaves, flowers and stems of *Lotus* release, after dessiccation (process which consists in removing water), an enjoyable perfume, which can flavour marinades.

In some areas, to give a flavor of the rabbit warren, the rabbit is packed inside, once emptied, with trefoil leaves and flowers.

Some cheeses with cow's milk, including German Schabzieger, are sometimes scented with yellow trefoil flowers.

Lotus Maritimus is also cultivated as a vegetable in certain regions.