

# SAGE, COMMON

**Botanical:** *Salvia officinalis* (LINN.)

**Family:** N.O. Labiatae

## Synonyms

(*Old English*) Sawge. Garden Sage. Red Sage. Broad-leaved White Sage. Narrow-leaved White Sage. *Salvia salvatrix*.

## Parts Used

Leaves, whole herb.

The Common Sage, the familiar plant of the kitchen garden, is an evergreen undershrub, not a native of these islands, its natural habitat being the northern shores of the Mediterranean. It has been cultivated for culinary and medicinal purposes for many centuries in England, France and Germany, being sufficiently hardy to stand any ordinary winter outside. Gerard mentions it as being in 1597 a well-known herb in English gardens, several varieties growing in his own garden at Holborn.

## Basic Description

Sage generally grows about a foot or more high, with wiry stems. The leaves are set in pairs on the stem and are 1 1/2 to 2 inches long, stalked, oblong, rounded at the ends, finely wrinkled by a strongly-marked network of veins on both sides, greyish-green in colour, softly hairy and beneath glandular. The flowers are in whorls, purplish and the corollas lipped. They blossom in August. All parts of the plant have a strong, scented odour and a warm, bitter, somewhat astringent taste, due to the volatile oil contained in the tissues.

## Habitat

Sage is found in its natural wild condition from Spain along the Mediterranean coast up to and including the east side of the Adriatic; it grows in profusion on the mountains and hills in Croatia and Dalmatia, and on the islands of Veglia and Cherso in Quarnero Gulf, being found mostly where there is a limestone formation with very little soil. When wild it is much like the common garden Sage, though more shrubby in appearance and has a more penetrating odour, being more spicy and astringent than the cultivated plant. The best kind, it is stated, grows on the islands of Veglia and Cherso, near Fiume, where the surrounding district is known as the Sage region. The collection of Sage forms an important cottage industry in Dalmatia. During its blooming season, moreover, the bees gather the nectar and genuine Sage honey commands there the highest price, owing to its flavour.



**Kitchen Sage**  
(*Salvia officinalis* LINN.)  
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In cultivation, Sage is a very variable species, and in gardens varieties may be found with narrower leaves, crisped, red, or variegated leaves and smaller or white flowers. The form of the calyx teeth also varies, and the tube of the corolla is sometimes much longer. The two usually absent upper stamens are sometimes present in very small-sterile hooks. The Red Sage and the Broad-leaved variety of the White (or Green) Sage - both of which are used and have been proved to be the best for medical purposes - and the narrow-leaved White Sage, which is best for culinary purposes as a seasoning, are classed merely as varieties of *Salvia officinalis*, not as separate species. There is a variety called Spanish, or Lavender-leaved Sage and another called Wormwood Sage, which is very frequent.

A Spanish variety, called *S. Candelabrum*, is a hardy perennial, the upper lip of its flower greenish yellow, the lower a rich violet, thus presenting a fine contrast.

*S. Lyrata* and *S. urticifolia* are well known in North America.

*S. hians*, a native of Simla, is hardy, and also desirable on account of its showy violet-and-white flowers.

The name of the genus, *Salvia*, is derived from the Latin *salvere*, to be saved, in reference to the curative properties of the plant, which was in olden times celebrated as a medicinal herb. This name was corrupted popularly to *Sauja* and *Sauge* (the French form), in Old English, 'Sawge,' which has become our present-day name of Sage.

In the United States Pharmacopoeia, the leaves are still officially prescribed, as they were formerly in the London Pharmacopoeia, but in Europe generally, Sage is now neglected by the regular medical practitioner, though is still used in domestic medicine. Among the Ancients and throughout the Middle Ages it was in high repute: *Cur moriatur homo cui Salvia crescit in horto?* ('Why should a man die whilst sage grows in his garden?') has a corresponding English proverb:

'He that would live for aye,  
Must eat Sage in May.'

The herb is sometimes spoken of as *S. salvatrix* ('Sage the Saviour'). An old tradition recommends that Rue shall be planted among the Sage, so as to keep away noxious toads from the valued and cherished plants. It was held that this plant would thrive or wither, just as the owner's business prospered or failed, and in Bucks, another tradition maintained that the wife rules when Sage grows vigorously in the garden.

In the Jura district of France, in Franche-Comte, the herb is supposed to mitigate grief, mental and bodily, and Pepys in his Diary says: 'Between Gosport and Southampton we observed a little churchyard where it was customary to sow all the graves with Sage.'

The following is a translation of an old French saying:

'Sage helps the nerves and by its powerful might  
Palsy is cured and fever put to flight.'

and Gerard says:

'Sage is singularly good for the head and brain, it quickeneth the senses and memory, strengtheneth the sinews, restoreth health to those that have the palsy, and taketh away shakey trembling of the members.'

He shared the popular belief that it was efficacious against the bitings of serpents, and says:

'No man need to doubt of the wholesomeness of *Sage Ale*, being brewed as it should be with Sage, Betony, Scabious, Spikenard, Squinnette (Squinancywort) and Fennell Seed.'

Many kinds of Sage have been used as substitutes for tea, the Chinese having been said to prefer Sage Tea to their own native product, at one time bartering for it with the Dutch and giving thrice the quantity of their choicest tea in exchange. It is recorded that George Whitfield, when at Oxford in 1733, lived wholesomely, if sparingly, on a diet of Sage Tea, sugar and coarse bread. Balsamic Sage, *S. grandiflora*, a broad-leaved Sage with many-flowered whorls of blossoms, used to be preferred to all others for making tea. An infusion of Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*), Sage and Wood Betony is said to make an excellent beverage for breakfast, as a substitute for tea, Speedwell having somewhat the flavour of Chinese green tea. In Holland the leaves of *S. glutinosa*, the yellow-flowered Hardy Sage, both flowers and foliage of which exhale a pleasant odour, are used to give flavour to country wines, and a good wine is made by boiling with sugar, the leaves and flowers of another Sage, *S. sclarea*, the Garden Clary. The latter is known in France as 'Toute bonne' - for its medicinal virtues.

It was formerly thought that Sage used in the making of Cheese improved its flavour, and Gay refers to this in a poem:

'Marbled with Sage, the hardening cheese she pressed.'

Italian peasants eat Sage as a preservative of health, and many other country people eat the leaves with bread and butter, than which, it has been said, there is no better and more wholesome way of taking it.

A species of Sage, *S. pomifera*, the APPLEBEARING SAGE, of a very peculiar growth, is common on some of the Greek islands. It has firm, fleshy protuberances of about 3/4 inch thickness, swelling out from the branches of the plant and supposed to be produced in the same manner as oak apples, by the puncture of an insect of the *Cynips* genus. These excrescences are semi-transparent like jelly. They are called Sage Apples, and under that name are to be met with in the markets. They are candied with sugar and made into a kind of sweetmeat and conserve which is regarded by the Greeks as a great delicacy, and is said to possess healing and salutary qualities. It has an agreeable and astringent flavour. This plant is considerably larger than the common Sage of our gardens and its flavour and smell are much more powerful, being more like a mixture of Lavender and Sage. It grows very abundantly in Candia, Syros and Crete, where it attains to the size of a small shrub. The leaves are collected annually, dried and used medicinally as an infusion, the Greeks being particular as to

the time and manner in which they are collected, the date being May 1, before sunrise. The infusion produces profuse perspiration, languor, and even faintness if used to excess. There is a smaller *Salvia* in Greece, the *S. Candica*, without excrescences.

Another south European species, an annual, *S. Horminum*, the RED-TOPPED SAGE, has its whorls of flowers terminated by clusters of small purple or red leaves, being for this peculiarity often grown in gardens as an ornamental plant. The leaves and seed of this species, put into the vat, while fermenting, greatly increase the inebriating quality of the liquor. An infusion of the leaves has been considered a good gargle for sore gums, and powdered makes a good snuff.

Certain varieties of Sage seeds are mucilaginous and nutritive, and are used in Mexico by the Indians as food, under the name of *Chia*.

### **Cultivation**

The Garden Sage succeeds best in a warm and rather dry border, but will grow well almost anywhere in ordinary garden soil; it thrives in a situation somewhat shaded from sunshine, but not strictly under trees.

### **Description**

It is a hardy plant, but though a perennial, does not last above three or four years without degenerating, so that the plantation should be renewed at least every four years. It is propagated occasionally by seed, but more frequently by cuttings. New plantations are readily made by pulling off the young shoots from three-year-old plants in spring, generally in the latter end of April, as soon as they attain a sufficiency of hardness to enable them to maintain themselves on the moisture of the ground and atmosphere, while the lower extremities are preparing roots. If advantage be taken of any showery weather that may occur, there is little trouble in obtaining any number of plants, which may either be struck in the bed where they are to grow, inserting a foot apart each way, or in some other shady spot whence they may be removed to permanent quarters when rooted. The latter plan is the best when the weather is too bright and sunny to expect Sage to strike well in its ordinary quarters. See the young plants do not suffer from want of water during their first summer, and hoe the rows regularly to induce a bushy growth, nipping off the growing tips if shooting up too tall. Treat the ground with soot and mulch in winter with old manure. Cuttings may also be taken in the autumn, as soon as the plants have ceased flowering.

Sage is also often propagated by layers, in the spring and autumn, the branches of old plants being pegged down on the ground and covered with 1/2 inch of earth. The plant, being like other of the woody-stemmed garden herbs, a 'stem rooter,' each of the stems thus covered will produce quantities of rootlets by just lying in contact with the ground, and can after a time be cut away from the old plant and transplanted to other quarters as a separate plant.

*Red Sage* is always propagated by layering or by cuttings, as the seed does not produce a red-leaved plant, but reverts back to the original green-leaved type, though

efforts are being made to insure the production of a Red Sage that shall set seed and remain true and develop into the red-leaved plant.

Sages backed by late-flowering Orange Lilies go very well together, and being in flower at the same time make an effective grouping. The calyces of Sage flowers remain on the plants well into late summer and give a lovely haze of reddish spikes; the smell of these seeding spikes is very distinct from the smell of the leaves, and much more like that of the Lemon-scented Verbena, pungent, aromatic and most refreshing.

At the present day, by far the largest demand for Sage is for culinary use, and it should pay to grow it in quantity for this purpose as it is little trouble. For this, the White variety, with somewhat pale green leaves should be taken.

In Dalmatia, where the collection of Sage in its wild condition forms an important cottage industry, it is gathered before blooming, the leaves being harvested from May to September, those plucked in midsummer being considered the best. The general opinion is that it should be gathered before the bloom opens, but the Austrian Pharmacopoeia states that it is best when gathered *during* bloom.

### **Chemical Constituents**

The chief constituent of Sage and its active principle is a yellow or greenish-yellow volatile oil (sp. gr. 0.910 to 0.930) with a penetrating odour. Tannin and resin are also present in the leaves, 0.5 to 1.0 per cent of the oil is yielded from the leaves and twigs when fresh, and about three times this quantity when dry.

The Sage oil of commerce is obtained from the herb *S. officinalis*, and distilled to a considerable extent in Dalmatia and recently in Spain, but from a different species of *Salvia*. A certain amount of oil is also distilled in Germany. The oil distilled in Dalmatia and in Germany is of typically Sage odour, and is used for flavouring purposes. The botanical origin of Spanish Sage oil is now identified as *S. triloba*, closely allied to *S. officinalis*, though probably other species may also be employed. The odour of the Spanish oil more closely resembles that of Spike Lavender than the Sage oil distilled in Germany for flavouring purposes, and is as a rule derived from the wild Dalmatian herb, *S. officinalis*. The resemblance of the Spanish oil to Spike Lavender oil suggests the possibility of its use for adulterative purposes, and it is an open secret that admixture of the Spanish Sage oil with Spanish Spike Lavender oil does take place to a considerable extent, though this can be detected by chemical analysis. It is closer in character to the oil of *S. sclarea*, Clary oil, which has a decided lavender odour, although in the oil of *S. triloba*, the ester percentage does not appear to be as high as in the oil of the *S. sclarea* variety.

Pure Dalmatian or German Sage oil is soluble in two volumes of 80 per cent alcohol, Spanish Sage oil is soluble in six volumes of 70 per cent alcohol.

Sage oil contains a hydrocarbon called Salvene; pinene and cineol are probably present in small amount, together with borneol, a small quantity of esters, and the ketone thujone, the active principle which confers the power of resisting putrefaction in animal substances. Dextro-camphor is also present in traces. A body has been

isolated by certain chemists called Salviol, which is now known to be identical with Thujone.

English distilled Sage oil has been said to contain Cedrene.

*S. cypria*, a native of the island of Cyprus, yields an essential oil, having a camphoraceous odour and containing about 75 per cent of Eucalyptol.

*S. mellifer* (syn. *Ramona stachyoides*) is a labiate plant found in South California, known as BLACK SAGE, with similar constituents, and also traces of formic acid.

### **Medicinal Action and Uses**

Stimulant, as tringent, tonic and carminative. Has been used in dyspepsia, but is now mostly employed as a condiment. In the United States, where it is still an official medicine, it is in some repute, especially in the form of an infusion, the principal and most valued application of which is as a wash for the cure of affections of the mouth and as a gargle in inflamed sore throat, being excellent for relaxed throat and tonsils, and also for ulcerated throat. The gargle is useful for bleeding gums and to prevent an excessive flow of saliva.

When a more stimulating effect to the throat is desirable, the gargle may be made of equal quantities of vinegar and water, 1/2 pint of hot malt vinegar being poured on 1 OZ. of leaves, adding 1/2 pint of cold water.

The infusion when made for *internal* use is termed Sage Tea, and can be made simply by pouring 1 pint of boiling water on to 1 OZ. of the dried herb, the dose being from a wineglassful to half a teacupful, as often as required, but the old-fashioned way of making it is more elaborate and the result is a pleasant drink, cooling in fevers, and also a cleanser and purifier of the blood. Half an ounce of fresh Sage leaves, 1 OZ. of sugar, the juice of 1 lemon, or 1/4 OZ. of grated rind, are infused in a quart of boiling water and strained off after half an hour. (In Jamaica the negroes sweeten Sage Tea with lime-juice instead of lemon.)

Sage Tea or infusion of Sage is a valuable agent in the delirium of fevers and in the nervous excitement frequently accompanying brain and nervous diseases and has considerable reputation as a remedy, given in small and oft-repeated doses. It is highly serviceable as a stimulant tonic in debility of the stomach and nervous system and weakness of digestion generally. It was for this reason that the Chinese valued it, giving it the preference to their own tea. It is considered a useful medicine in typhoid fever and beneficial in biliousness and liver complaints, kidney troubles, haemorrhage from the lungs or stomach, for colds in the head as well as sore throat and quinsy and measles, for pains in the joints, lethargy and palsy. It will check excessive perspiration in phthisis cases, and is useful as an emmenagogue. A cup of the strong infusion will be found good to relieve nervous headache.

The infusion made strong, without the lemons and sugar, is an excellent lotion for ulcers and to heal raw abrasions of the skin. It has also been popularly used as an application to the scalp, to darken the hair.

The fresh leaves, rubbed on the teeth, will cleanse them and strengthen the gums. Sage is a common ingredient in tooth-powders.

The volatile oil is said to be a violent epileptiform convulsant, resembling the essential oils of absinthe and nutmeg. When smelt for some time it is said to cause a sort of intoxication and giddiness. It is sometimes prescribed in doses of 1 to 3 drops, and used for removing heavy collections of mucus from the respiratory organs. It is a useful ingredient in embrocations for rheumatism.

In cases where heat is required, Sage has been considered valuable when applied externally in bags, as a poultice and fomentation.

In Sussex, at one time, to munch Sage leaves on nine consecutive mornings, whilst fasting, was a country cure for ague, and the dried leaves have been smoked in pipes as a remedy for asthma.

In the region where Sage grows wild, its leaves are boiled in vinegar and used as a tonic.

Among many uses of the herb, Culpepper says that it is:

'Good for diseases of the liver and to make blood. A decoction of the leaves and branches of Sage made and drunk, saith Dioscorides, provokes urine and causeth the hair to become black. It stayeth the bleeding of wounds and cleaneth ulcers and sores. Three spoonful of the juice of Sage taken fasting with a little honey arrests spitting or vomiting of blood in consumption. It is profitable for all pains in the head coming of cold rheumatic humours, as also for all pains in the joints, whether inwardly or outwardly. The juice of Sage in warm water cureth hoarseness and cough. Pliny saith it cureth stinging and biting serpents. Sage is of excellent use to help the memory, warming and quickening the senses. The juice of Sage drunk with vinegar hath been of use in the time of the plague at all times. Gargles are made with Sage, Rosemary, Honeysuckles and Plantains, boiled in wine or water with some honey or alum put thereto, to wash sore mouths and throats, as need requireth. It is very good for stitch or pains in the sides coming of wind, if the place be fomented warm with the decoction in wine and the herb also, after boiling, be laid warm thereto.'

## **MEDICINAL RECIPES**

### **A Gargle for a Sore Throat**

A small glass of port wine, a tablespoonful of Chile vinegar, 6 Sage leaves, and a dessertspoonful of honey; simmer together on the fire for 5 minutes.

### **A Cure for Sprains**

Bruise a handful of Sage leaves and boil them in a gill of vinegar for 5 minutes; apply this in a folded napkin as hot as it can be borne to the part affected.

# SAGE, CLARY

**Botanical:** *Salvia sclarea*

**Family:** N.O. Labiatae

## Synonyms

Clary. Horminum. Gallitricum. Clear Eye. See Bright.  
(*German*) Muskateller Salbei.

## Parts Used

Herb, leaves, seeds.

## Habitat

The Common Clary, like the Garden Sage, is not a native of Great Britain, having first been introduced into English cultivation in the year 1562. It is a native of Syria, Italy, southern France and Switzerland, but will thrive well upon almost any soil that is not too wet, though it will frequently rot upon moist ground in the winter.



**SAGE, CLARY**  
(*Horminum Pyrenaicum*)  
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Gerard describes and figures several varieties of Clary, under the names of *Horminum* and *Gallitricum*. He describes it as growing 'in divers barren places almost in every country, especially in the fields of Holborne neare unto Grayes Inne . . . and at the end of Chelsea.'

Salmon, in 1710, in *The English Herbal*, gives a number of varieties of the Garden Clary, which he calls *Horminum hortense*, in distinction to *H. Sylvestre*, the Wild Clary, subdividing it into the Common Clary (*H. commune*), the True Garden Clary of Dioscorides (*H. sativum verum Dioscorides*), the Yellow Clary (*Calus Jovis*), and the Small or German Clary (*H. humile Germanicum* or *Gallitricum alterum Gerardi*). This last variety being termed *Gerardi*, indicates that Gerard classified this species when it was first brought over from the Continent, evidently taking great pains to trace its history, giving in his *Herbal* its Greek name and its various Latin ones. That the Clary was known in ancient times is shown by the second variety, the True Garden Clary, being termed *Dioscoridis*.

Another variety of *Horminum* is given in *The Treasury of Botany*, called *H. pyrenaicum*, and described as 'a tufted perennial herb, with numerous root-leaves, simple almost leafless stems and purplish-blue flowers which grow in whorls of six, all turned the same way. It is a native of the temperate parts of Europe, on the mountains.'

## Description

The Common Garden Clary is a biennial plant, its square, brownish stems growing 2 to 3 feet high, hairy and with few branches. The leaves are arranged in pairs, almost stalkless and are almost as large as the hand, oblong and heart-shaped, wrinkled,



irregularly toothed at the margins and covered with velvety hairs. The flowers are in a long, loose, terminal spike, on which they are set in whorls. The lipped corollas, similar to the Garden Sage, but smaller, are of a pale blue or white. The flowers are interspersed with large coloured, membranous bracts, longer than the spiny calyx. Both corollas and bracts are generally variegated with pale purple and yellowish-white. The seeds are blackish brown, 'contained in long, toothed husks,' as an old writer describes the calyx. The whole plant possesses a very strong, aromatic scent, somewhat resembling that of Tolu while the taste is also aromatic, warm and slightly bitter.

According to Ettmueller, this herb was first brought into use by the wine merchants of Germany, who employed it as an adulterant, infusing it with Elder flowers, and then adding the liquid to the Rhenish wine, which converted it into the likeness of Muscatel. It is still called in Germany *Muskateller Salbei* (Muscatel Sage).

Waller (1822) states it was also employed in this country as a substitute for Hops, for sophisticating beer, communicating considerable bitterness and intoxicating property, which produced an effect of insane exhilaration of spirits, succeeded by severe headache. Lobel says:

'Some brewers of Ale and Beere doe put it into their drinke to make it more heady, fit to please drunkards, who thereby, according to their several dispositions, become either dead drunke, or foolish drunke, or madde drunke.'

In some parts of the country a wine has been made from the herb in flower, boiled with sugar, which has a flavour not unlike Frontinac.

The English name Clary originates in the Latin name *sclarea*, a word derived from *clarus* (clear). Clary was gradually modified into 'Clear Eye,' one of its popular names, and from the fact that the seeds have been used for clearing the sight.

Sometimes we find the plant not only called 'Clear Eye,' but also 'See Bright' and even 'Eyebright,' though this name belongs to another plant - *Euphrasia officinalis*.

### **Cultivation**

Clary is propagated by seed, which should be sown in spring. When fit to move, the seedlings should be transplanted to an open spot of ground, a foot apart each way, if required in large quantities. After the plants have taken root, they will require no further care but to keep them free of weeds. The winter and spring following, the leaves will be in perfection. As the plant is a biennial only, dying off the second summer, after it has ripened seeds, there should be young plants annually raised for use.

### **Parts Used**

The herb and leaves, used both fresh and dry, dried in the same manner as the Garden Sage. Formerly the root was used, dry, in domestic medicine, and also the seeds.

### **Constituents**

*Salvia sclarea* yields an oil with a highly aromatic odour, resembling that of ambergris. It is known commercially as Clary oil, or Muscatel Sage, and is largely used as a fixer of perfumes. Pinene, cineol and linalol have been isolated from this oil.

French oil of Clary has a specific gravity of 0.895 to 0.930, and is soluble in two volumes of 80 per cent alcohol. German oil of Clary has a specific gravity of 0.910 to 0.960, and is soluble in two volumes of 90 per cent alcohol.

### **Medicinal Action and Uses**

Antispasmodic, balsamic, carminative, tonic, aromatic, aperitive, astringent, and pectoral.

The plant has been used, both fresh and dry, either alone or with other herbs, as an infusion or a tincture.

It has mostly been employed in disordered states of the digestion, as a stomachic, and has also proved useful in kidney diseases.

For violent cases of hysteria or wind colic, a spirituous tincture has been found of use, made by macerating in warm water for 14 days, 2 OZ. of dried Clary leaves and flowers, 1 OZ. of Chamomile flowers, 1/2 ox. bruised Avens root, 2 drachms of bruised Caraway and Coriander seeds, and 3 drachms of bruised Burdock seeds, adding 2 pints of proof spirit, then filtering and diluting with double quantity of water - a wineglassful being the dose.

Culpepper says:

'For tumours, swellings, etc., make a mucilage of the seeds and apply to the spot. This will also draw splinters and thorns out of the flesh.... For hot inflammation and boils before they rupture, use a salve made of the leaves boiled with hot vinegar, honey being added later till the required consistency is obtained.' He recommends a powder of the dry roots taken as snuff to relieve headache, and 'the fresh leaves, fried in butter, first dipped in a batter of flour, eggs, and a little milke, serve as a dish to the table that is not unpleasant to any and exceedingly profitable.'

The juice of the herb drunk in ale and beer, as well as the ordinary infusion, has been recommended as very helpful in all women's diseases and ailments.

In Jamaica, where the plant is found, it was much in use among the negroes, who considered it cooling and cleansing for ulcers, and also used it for inflammations of the eyes. A decoction of the leaves boiled in coco-nut oil was used by them to cure the stings of scorpions. Clary and a Jamaican species of Vervain form two of the ingredients of an aromatic warm bath sometimes prescribed there with benefit.

# SAGE, VERVAIN

**Botanical:** *Salvia Verbenaca*

**Family:** N.O. Labiatae

## Synonyms

Wild English Clary. Christ's Eye. Oculus Christi.

## Parts Used

Leaves, seeds.

The Wild English Clary, or Vervain Sage, is a native of all parts of Europe and not uncommon in England in dry pastures and on roadsides, banks and waste ground, especially near the sea, or on chalky soil. It is a smaller plant than the Garden Clary, but its medicinal virtues are rather more powerful.

## Description

The perennial root is woody, thick and long, the stem 1 to 2 feet high, erect with the leaves in distinct pairs, the lower shortly stalked, and the upper ones stalkless. The radical leaves lie in a rosette and have foot-stalks 1 1/2 to 4 inches long, their blades about the same length, oblong in shape, blunt at their ends and heart-shaped at the base, wavy at the margins, which are generally indented by five or six shallow, blunt lobes on each side, their surfaces much wrinkled. The whole plant is aromatic, especially when rubbed, and is rendered conspicuous by its long spike of purplish-blue flowers, first dense, afterwards becoming rather lax. The whorls of the spike are sixflowered, and at the base of each flower are two heart-shaped, fringed, pointed bracts. The calyx is much larger than the corolla. The plant is in bloom from June to August. The seeds are smooth, and like the Garden Clary, produce a great quantity of soft, tasteless mucilage, when moistened. If put under the eyelids for a few moments the tears dissolve this mucilage, which envelops any dust and brings it out safely. Old writers called this plant 'Oculus Christi,' or 'Christ's Eye.'

## Medicinal Action and Uses

A decoction of the leaves,' says Culpepper, 'being drank, warms the stomach, also it helps digestion and scatters congealed blood in any part of the body.'

This Clary was thought to be more efficacious to the eye than the Garden variety.

'The distilled water strengthening the eyesight, especially of old people,' says Culpepper, 'cleaneth the eyes of redness waterishness and heat: it is a gallant remedy for dimness of sight, to take one of the seeds of it and put it into the eyes, and there let it remain till it drops out of itself, the pain will be nothing to speak on: it will cleanse the eyes of all filthy and putrid matter; and repeating it will take off a film which covereth the sight.'

## Other Species

*Salvia pratensis*, the MEADOW SAGE - our other native Sage - is a very rare plant, found only in a few localities in Cornwall, Kent and Oxfordshire, and by some authorities is considered hardly a true native.

It is common in some parts of Italy and the Ionian Islands.

It has the habit of *S. Verbenaca*, but is larger. The flowers are very showy, large and bright blue, arranged on a long spike, four flowers in each whorl, the corolla (about four times as long as the calyx) having the prominent upper lip much arched and compressed and often glutinous. The stem bears very few leaves.

Several plants, though not true Sages, have been popularly called 'Sage': *Phlomis fruticosa*, a hardy garden shrub, 2 to 4 feet high, with flowers either yellow or dusky yellow, was known as Jerusalem Sage; Turner (1548) terms it so and he is followed in this by Green (1832), whereas Lyte (1578) gives this name to *Pulmonaria officinalis*, the Common Lungwort, and Gerard (1597), describing *Phlomis fruticosa*, gives it another name, saying, 'The leaves are in shape like the leaves of Sage, whereupon the vulgar people call it French Sage.' Gerard gives the name of 'Sage of Bethlem' to *Pulmonaria officinalis*; in localities of North Lincolnshire, the name has been given to the Garden Mint, *Mentha viridis*. 'Garlick Sage' is one of the names quoted by Gerard for *Teucrium scorodonia*, which we find variously termed by old writers, Mountain Sage, Wild Sage and Wood Sage