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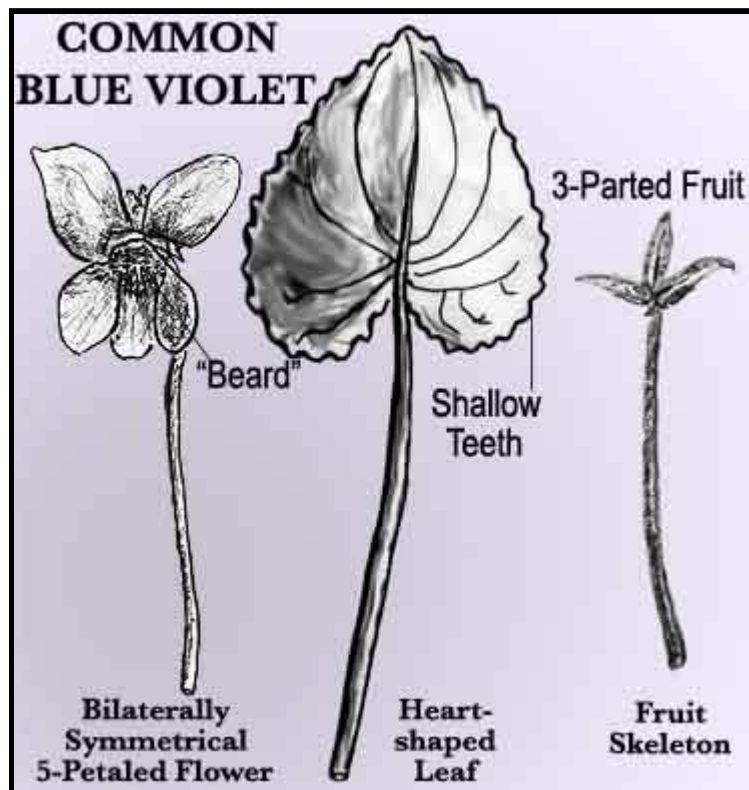
Violets (*Viola species*)



A Pictorial Portrait

Illustrations and photos by "Wildman," clipart from Clipart.com

This group of herbaceous (non-woody) plants has a bilaterally symmetrical (2-sided) 5-petaled flowers, often with bushy stamens forming a "beard" inside. Many have tasty, edible flowers and leaves, although the yellow violet, which grows in wetlands, may cause gastrointestinal distress. Don't eat African "violets," which aren't true violets.



Common Blue Violet (*Viola papilionacea*)

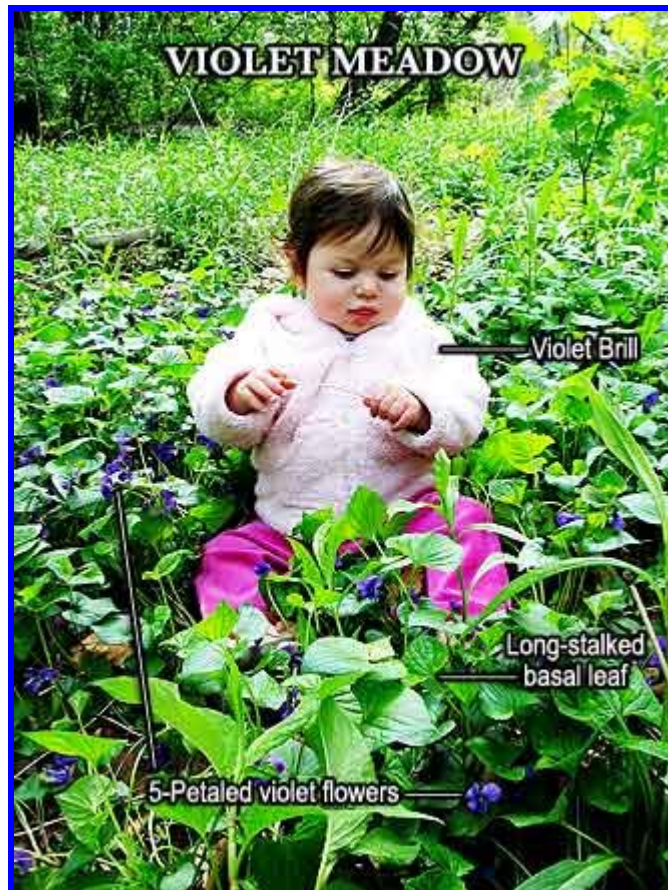
This is the most common species, with a sterile violet-colored flower that blooms in the spring. There are no leaves on the flower stalk. The heart-shaped, shallow-toothed leaves arise separately from the ground. They're good to eat in springtime, but become tough and coarse in the summer.

Poisonous dwarf larkspur (*Delphinium tricornes*) has a similar violet flower, but with a "spur" behind the flower, and a different leaf. Monkshood (*Aconitum uncinatum*), also poisonous, has a large, helmet-like upper sepal that covers 2 petals.



Common Blue Violet Flowers and Leaves

Note the 2-sided violet flowers with beautifully veined petals.



Watch the Violet-in-the-Violets Slide Show: [Forward](#)

Violet Meadow

Violet Brill enjoys playing with and eating violets in a meadow full of her namesake.

Violets grow in partially shaded spots in moist woods, and in meadows and gardens. They spread by underground rhizomes (which are toxic), creating dense stands of plants.



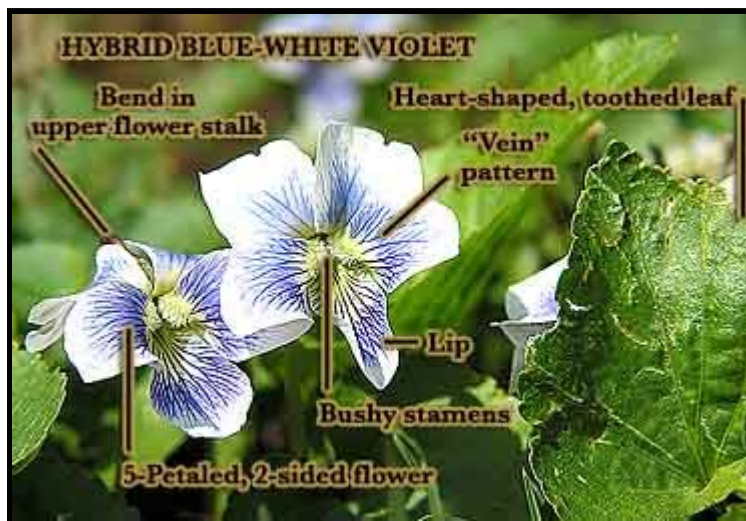
Common Blue Violet Fruit

A cryptic (hidden) flower appears in autumn, growing close to the ground, self-fertilizing and setting seed.



White Violet Flower

The white violet's flowers and leaves are also edible. Note the "beard" of fuzzy stamens in the lower petals.



Blue-White Violet Hybrid

This hybrid between blue and white species is also quite beautiful and tasty.

[Violet Recipes](#)

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