



Cyclamen hederifolium

Cyclamen hederifolium (ivy-leaved cyclamen or sowbread) is a species of flowering plant in the genus *Cyclamen*, of the family *Primulaceae*. It is the most widespread cyclamen species, the most widely cultivated after the florist's cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*), and the most hardy and vigorous in oceanic climates. It is native to woodland, shrubland, and rocky areas in the Mediterranean region from southern France to western Turkey and on Mediterranean islands, and naturalized farther north in Europe and in the Pacific Northwest.

Names

The word "cyclamen" comes through Latin from the Greek *cyclamīnos* or *κυκλάμινος* (also *κυκλαμής*) meaning "circle", with reference to the shape of the tuber.

The species name *hederifolium* comes from the Latin *hedera* (ivy) and *folium* (leaf), because of the shape and patterning of the leaves.

The older species name, *neapolitanum*, refers to Naples, where the species grows.

Description

Cyclamen hederifolium is a tuberous perennial that blooms and sprouts leaves in autumn, grows through the winter, and goes dormant before summer, when the seed pods ripen and open.

Tuber

The tuber is round-flattened and produces roots from the top and sides, leaving the base bare. In the florist's cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*), roots come from the bottom, leaving the top and sides bare.

The tuber becomes larger with age; older specimens commonly become more than 25 cm (10 in) across. In other species, tubers do not grow as large; *Cyclamen coum* usually does not reach more than 6.5 cm (2.6 in) across.

Leaves and flowers grow from buds on top.

Leaves

The leaves are variably shaped and colored. Depending on the specimen, leaf shape varies from heart-shaped to long and arrow-shaped, usually with 2-3 angled lobes on each side, resembling the juvenile leaves of ivy (*Hedera*). Leaf color varies from all-green to all-silver, but the most common is a Christmas tree or hastate pattern in silver or pewter and various shades of green.

The leaf and flower stalks of *Cyclamen hederifolium* grow outwards and then up, forming an "elbow". Plants in narrow pots often have a ring of leaves around the outside of the pot. In the closely related *Cyclamen africanum*, stalks grow up from the tuber without a bend near the base.

Flowers

The flowers bloom from late summer to autumn and have 5 petals, usually pink, purple, or white with a streaky magenta V-shaped marking on the nose, but sometimes pure white with no markings.

The edges of the petals near the nose of the flower are curved outwards into strong auricles. These are not present in some other species, such as *Cyclamen persicum*. The flowers are occasionally fragrant. The shape of the flower varies from long and thin to short and squat.

Cultivation

Cyclamen hederifolium is usually listed as the hardiest species of cyclamen. In oceanic climates, it self-seeds abundantly and will crowd out less vigorous species such as *Cyclamen coum* if the two are planted together. In cold continental climates such as Calgary, Alberta, where *Cyclamen purpurascens* grows well, it may not survive. DavesGarden.com lists it as hardy to zone 5a (−20 °F or −29 °C), although hardiness is dependent on presence of snow cover.



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Cyclamen hederifolium (sinonimo: *C. polii*) è una pianta erbacea della famiglia *Primulaceae*, originaria dell'Italia e della Grecia.

Descrizione

È una specie rustica dotata di foglie di colore verde scuro variegato in verde chiaro o argento sulla pagina superiore e di colore rosso sulla pagina inferiore.

Le piante sono alte 15 – 20 cm; i fiori rosa pallido, grandi 2 – 3 cm, compaiono a fine agosto o settembre, le foglie spuntano successivamente e persistono fino a primavera. Ne esiste una varietà a fiori bianchi.

Il ciclamino con foglie d'edera è una specie a distribuzione stenomediterraneo-settentrionale presente con due sottospecie in tutte le regioni d'Italia salvo che in Valle d'Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige e Friuli Venezia Giulia; rarissima nelle regioni settentrionali salvo che in Liguria, più comune al centro-sud. Nella città di Roma la specie ha una distribuzione molto sparsa, che tende a evitare le aree del centro; nel Parco di Villa Torlonia è localmente comune nelle aree con vegetazione boschiva più densa. Cresce in leccete e boschi caducifogli (quercete, castagneti) su suoli piuttosto profondi in stazioni ombrose, al di sotto della fascia montana inferiore. Tutta la pianta e soprattutto il tubero contengono ciclamina, un composto altamente tossico.

Il nome generico in greco significa 'rotondo, circolare', per la forma del tubero; il nome specifico in latino significa 'con foglie d'edera'.

Habitat: cresce nell'intervallo altimetrico tra 0 e 1300 metri s.l.m. Nei boschi e nella boscaglia.

Periodo fioritura: Settembre-Novembre

Localmente alcuni contadini, in passato, raccoglievano bulbi di ciclamino per inserirli negli interstizi dei muri a secco; alcuni riferiscono, inoltre, che i bulbi erano raccolti anche per farne commercio con i fiorai che li ripiantavano in vaso.