



Primrose



Latin: *Primula vulgaris*
Irish: *Sabhaircín*

The primrose is an early flowering plant, usually appearing in late winter or early spring. In this way, the primrose is exposed to the sunlight before the leaves appear on the trees and the woodland floor becomes shaded.

The primrose's appearance so early in the year gave it its Latin name *Primula*, meaning 'first rose'.

Flowers: Each primrose plant produces two types of flowers. They are called 'pin-eyed' and 'thrum-eyed'. Pollen from one type of flower needs to be transferred to the other so the plant can pollinate. Depending on the variety, the colour of the flower can be cream, yellow, red, purple and pink. It is believed that the depth and strength of colour of the primrose flower depends on the amount of sunshine it gets.

Leaves: The leaves of the primrose are thick, crinkly and have a deep green colour. Like the stems, they are thick and hardy.

Uses: The evening primrose is one variety of this flower that is used as a herbal remedy, although this variety is native to America and not to Ireland. Evening primrose oil is taken to relieve very itchy, dry skin, and is also believed to help people who suffer from asthma and arthritis.

Other: Long ago, many people in Ireland used to hang a string of primroses over their doorway at the start of May. This was believed to protect the house from the fairies.