

Common Name: **Sweet Rocket**

Genus: *Hesperis*

Species: *matronalis*

Family: *Brassicaceae*

AKA: Dame's Rocket, White Rocket, Vesper-flower, Dame's Violet, Ruchette, Night scented gillyflower, Queens's gillyflower, Mother-of-the evening.



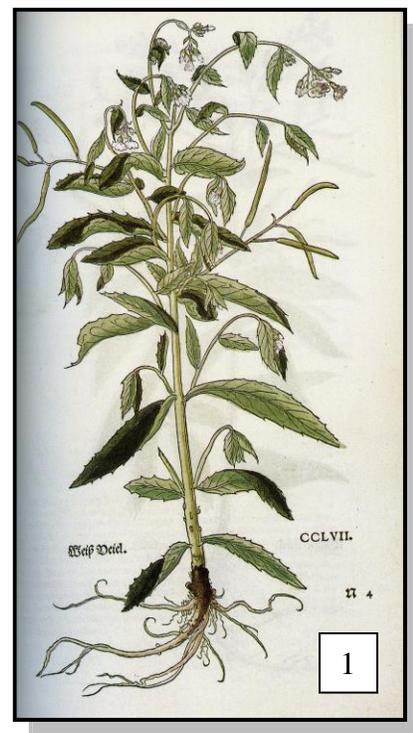
### Historical Uses:

**Medical:** “All this kind of rockets are marital plants. This species is celebrated against diseases of the lungs. The juice is excellent in asthma, and a syrup made of it in all oppressions and stuff things up of the breast; as also against inveterate coughs. Some have ascribed to it a provocative quality to the venery, but this seems upon too slight grounds. It partakes much of the nature of hedge mustard.” (1)

“The distilled water of the floures hereof is counted to be a most effectual thing to procure a sweat.” (2)

**Ornamental:** “They are sown in gardens for the beauty of their floures” (3)

**Other:** “In the language of flowers, the Rocket has been taken to represent deceit, since it gives out a lovely perfume in the evening, but in the daytime has none. Hence its name of Hesperis, or Vesper-flower, given it by the ancients.” (4)



### Contemporary Uses:

**Ornamental:** Excellent plant for meadows, naturalized areas or cottage gardens. May also be grown in borders, but foliage tends to disappear after flowering, thus necessitating the use of annuals or late developing perennials to fill in the gaps. (5)

**Area of Origin:** Europe to Central Asia

**Physical description:** upright, multi-branch, dark green foliage with ovate to Lance-shaped leaves.

**Plant type:** Herbaceous perennial

**Form:** Upright

**Height:** 2 to 4 feet

**Flower color:** White, lavender, violet

**Flowering period:** April to May

**Soil type/requirements:** Medium soil with medium water requirements

**Hardiness zone:** USDA zone 3 to 8

**Sun requirements:** Full sun to partial shade

**Propagation:** easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soil. Best in part shade and hot summer climates. A short-lived perennial or biennial that remains in the garden for many years as a result of prolific self-seeding. Prompt removal of spent flowers may encourage a second flush of bloom. Plants can become what he at the base and persist for a number of years but are best replaced with new seedlings. Easily grown from seed. (6)



### Sources

1. Culpeper, p. 134
2. Gerard, p. 463
3. Gerard, p. 463
4. Grieve, p. 681
5. Missouri Botanical Garden website <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=d200>
6. Ibid

### Illustrations/Images:

1. Fuchs 1543
2. PSUMG 2016
3. PSUMG 2016