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EDELWEISS and ASTER

The *Edelweiss* and *Aster* both come from the family of the Sunflower *asteraceae*



Leontopodium alpinum



Edelweiss



Edelweisses

Edleweiss is one of the well known European mountain flowers, belonging to the sunflower family. The name comes from German *edel* which means noble and *weiss* meaning white.

The scientific name, *Leontopodium* means "lion's paw", being derived from the Greek words *leon* meaning lion and *podion* a miniature of pous, meaning the foot.

Flowering stalks of *Edelweiss* can grow to a size of 3-20 cm and in cultivation, up to 40 cm). The leaves appear woolly because of the covering of white hairs. The flowers are fedted and also woolly with white hairs, with characteristic bloom consisting of five to six small yellow flower heads surrounded by leaflets in star form. The flowers are in bloom between July and September. It is unequally distributed and prefers rocky limestone places at 2000-2800 in altitude. It is not toxic, and has been used traditionally in folk medicine as a remedy against abdominal and respiratory diseases. The dense hair appears to be an adaptation to high altitudes, protecting the plant from cold, aridity and UV radiation.

Edelweiss is a protected



Kingdom : Plantae
(unranked): Angiosperms
(unranked): Eudicots
(unranked): Asterales
Order: Asterales
Family: Asteraceae
Tribe: Gnaphalioideae [1]
Genus: *Leontopodium*
Species: *L. alpinum*

plant in many countries, including Mongolia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Switzerland, France, Italy, Germany, Spain (Ordesa National Park), Slovakia (Tatra National Park), Slovenia (in Gorizia and Gradisca since 1896, in Carniola since 1898), Austria (since 1886) and Romania (since 1933).

It usually grows in inaccessible places, which is why it is associated in many countries of the alpine region with mountaineering. Its white colour is considered a symbol of purity, and holds a Latin as well as Romanian name, *florina reginei* - the Queen's flower.

The *Aster* is a genus of flowering plants in the family Asteraceae. The genus once contained nearly 600 species in Eurasia and North America, but after morphologic and molecular research on the plant during the 1990s, it was decid-

ed that the North American species are better treated in a series of other genera. After this split there are roughly 180 species within the genus, all but one being confined to Eurasia.

The name *Aster* comes from the Ancient Greek word *astron*, meaning "star", arriving through the Latin word *astrum* with the same meaning, referring to the shape of the flower head. Many species and a variety of hybrids and varieties are popular as garden plants because of their attractive and colourful flowers. *Aster*

species are used as food plants by the young insect of a number of *Lepidoptera* species. *Asters* can grow in all hardiness zones.

The genus *Aster* is now generally restricted to the Old World species, with *Aster amellus* as well as of the family Asteraceae. The New World species have now been reclassified in the genera *Himantaster*, *Canadanthus*, *Doellingeria*, *Eucephalus*, *Eurybia*, *Ionactis*, *Oligoneuron*, *Oreostenema*, *Sericocarpus* and *Symphotrichum*, though all are treated within the tribe Asteraceae. Regardless of the taxonomic change, all are still widely referred to as *Asters* in the horticultural trades.

In the UK there are only two native members of the genus of which one, *Goldilocks* is very rare, the other being *Aster tripolium*, the Sea aster. The *Aster alpinus vierhapperi* is the only species native to North America.

Source: Wikipedia



Aster in bloom



Deep pink Aster



A purple Aster

Kingdom : Plantae
(unranked): Angiosperms
(unranked): Eudicots
(unranked): Asterales
Order: Asterales
Family: Asteraceae
Tribe: Asteroideae
Genus: *Aster*

Endangered species

DEMI

Endangered species is directly directed to the fact about certain animals reaching the brink of extinction because of the harsh cruelty they are faced by greedy, selfish, money hungry hunters who come after them for their fur, skin, tusks, and other parts of their homes and habitats has been destroyed for the development of a country.

There are lots of incidents that are taking place the world over, and the time one has is also going fast, giving one only a few seconds to think and act on the thought. Through this, people think of what is more important to them, for them to survive and in that moment of thought they choose what they want and begin their work on lands and homes of creatures who cannot communicate with us.

These creatures have no way of telling intruders that this is their home and that the climate they are in is the only climate that can

keep them surviving to the day they die. Activists and certain authorities have tried to keep these rare animals safe from harm but no matter what they do, people somehow manage to take the lives of the creatures and sell it for a price that is not worth a cent.

Tropical forests may look all lovely and the star attraction for environmental protectionists but they are the ones who are prone for destruction as they have plants to cure certain diseases, to be an antidote for mental stresses and many others. The so called authorities come on their expedition, destroying whatever that comes towards their path and take what they want and leave the place in utter mess. We have to put a pause to this as plants and animals hold medicinal, agricultural, ecological, commercial and aesthetic/recreational value and they must be protected so the next coming generation can have the chance of seen these creatures, live and well than in a wax history museum.

The number of endangered species being killed or dying a natural death is rising as we speak. The endangered animals are the White Rhinoceros, Leopards, the Giant Pandas, Sumatran Tigers, Komodo Dragons, Tapirs, Birds of Paradise and many others.

People from every country should in their own way work together to protect these animals, as when we die and our next in line generation comes to face the world, they will have nothing but dry grass and rocks to admire.



Sumatran Tiger



Tapir



White Rhinoceros

Signboard

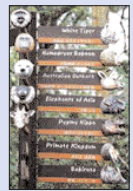
What is it with people and signboards? I mean when a sign board is right in front of their face telling them not to do something, or go this way or beware in languages that they can understand, they still go and do the opposite.

I see this especially in the zoo. There is a big signboard that says "Don't feed the animals" or "Don't cross the fence" or "Don't touch the animals", but do the people follow the signs, no they don't.

Are they really that stupid? I mean can't they understand that the reason the signboards have been put up is for a reason. Some of the animals that are brought from other countries are not brought for torture or for pleasure by just staring at them through the cage. A zoo is a place where rare breeds of animals are kept for people who can't afford safaris and trips abroad to see animals the world over. But do they care about all that?

They don't because it's not theirs to look after, right? They do what they like when they go there. They eat worse than animals and when they finish eating, whatever paper or plastic bottle they have they will throw it on the ground right next to the dustbin and a board that says "Don't Litter", and once again, it's written in all three languages.

The last time I had a visit to the zoo, it was like a nightmare to me. I mean the way these people who came from all the countryside treated the animals was so disgusting! They are fascinated by what they see but then poking them, throwing



food at them, annoying them and the worst part, the adults don't do anything about it because they are also throwing food at animals, where a signboard right in front of them and outside the cage says "Don't feed the animals".

What will it take for people to understand, that animals also have feelings, they are not at all happy about being exhibitionists for their viewing pleasure and the fact that the reason they have signboards are put near their cages is for their safety as well as ours? If people can't go to the zoo without keeping their hands and food to themselves, then I guess the only thing to do is save the zoo money get cable and watch Animal Planet, then you can laugh, eat, litter and do what you want in your own home.

Because the zoo is a home for those animals you bully just because they are cages up! You put a board on your gate saying "Beware: dog", you wouldn't like it if someone came and annoyed your dog got bitten and you had to look after their medical expenses, would you? I think not.

So next time you go anywhere read the sign twice over! **DH**



Whaaats up?



Sausage dog



You ain't going anywhere, buddy



My look-a-like

The funny corner



Peekaboo

Dear Readers,

Your stories about your pet, your garden, exhibitions and events regarding animals as well as plants are most welcome on this page. You are free to express your ideas on what you see happening around you, for example if you see any wrong - doings to an animal or see that an animal needs help in the streets or anywhere please write and let us know so that we can get the relevant authorities to help them.

Please send your contributions to No.35, D.R. Wijewardena Mawatha, Colombo - 10 or email to demid5@gmail.com. Hope to hear from you'll soon. Have a lovely weekend!

