

Great Willowherb

Epilobium hirsutum

Plants · In flower Jul–Aug

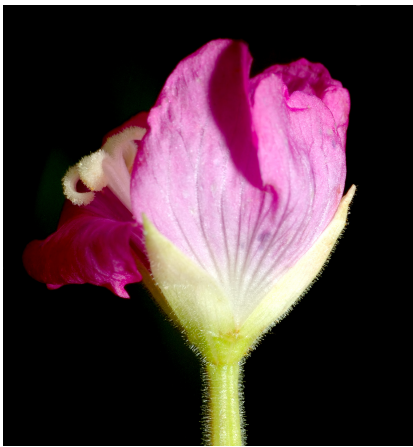


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A tall, softly hairy perennial of wet ground with narrow, toothed, stalkless leaves clasping the stem and large purple-pink flowers, each with four notched petals and a conspicuous creamy-white four-lobed stigma at the centre. Great willowherb grows in dense stands along ditches, riverbanks, marshes and damp waste ground around Dumfries.

BEHAVIOUR

The old country name codlins-and-cream refers to the pink-and-white flower, likened to cooked apples and cream. It spreads by both rhizome and abundant plumed seed, forming tall dense stands that shade out smaller plants. Elephant hawk-moth caterpillars feed on willowherbs, and the flowers are well worked by bumblebees through high summer.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Willowherbs (Onagraceae)
HEIGHT	80–180 cm
STATUS	Native; common on wet ground

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