

The first dialogue: A liverleaf's tale

Blue Wonder

Firstly, I would like to introduce myself: my name is '**Blaues Wunder**'. I'm sorry, my complete name is **Hepatica nobilis var. nobilis 'Blaues Wunder'**, for those of you who take naming seriously.

When my finder, who's the narrator of my story, picked me out from among many others of my peers a few years ago, he was probably impressed by the splendour of my flowers with their large, dark violet-blue sepals and the three consistent equally large leaf lobes. And of course, I'm a stately plant with a height of ca. 20 cm. That is what I can tell you about my appearance, so you know who you are dealing with. I'd like to tell you what a year in my life looks like:

Let's start in **April**, that's the period when I take up most of my food. The soil is lovely humid, the sun is bringing some pleasant warmth, my roots are spreading and, on my pedicels, the seedheads are ripening with my progeny. In this month, my propagator is helping me by dividing me up, so I can give some divisions which are true to name.

In **May**, me and my congeners are full in growth and we take on strength to survive the hot months of June and July. At the same time, my seeds are ripening, ready for the ants to spread them all over the garden. The new leaves I formed, are now becoming strong and robust, the old ones are bending towards the soil, where they rest and turn into humus, bringing nutrition into the cycle of the earth..

With the beginning of **June**, monotony starts to set in, the grass surrounding me is in growth and helps me to stay cool and by bringing morning dew. It's teeming with all kinds of creatures around me and I must be on the lookout for any beetle or caterpillar who wants to nibble on my beautiful new leaves.

July is warm, often too hot for me, so I spread my leaves flat on the soil, which helps to preserve the last humidity in the soil. But we should be on the lookout again! Now some moulds are growing, and they like to grow on weak leaves which they will use as sustenance. So, I'm very happy when my gardener makes his round with a fungicide to keep me safe from their attack.

With **August** come warm days and cooler nights, which I love so much. Now I'm starting to take up nutrition with my roots again, to prepare myself for winter. I'm incredibly grateful for a small amount of fertilizer on top of my leaves and on the soil.



Even in **September** and **October**, I'm still in growth. I'm still taking up food to be stronger, since we can't predict how long the following winter will be.

In **November** I'm going into rest. It's starting to get too cold, sunlight and with it the warmth becomes a rare commodity. My friend, the gardener, improves the soil with a bit of lime, clay granules, loam, and some organic fertilizer. I can prepare myself for the most beautiful time of the year.

December is grey and gloomy, I've been covered by leaves, which will protect me from frost and cold winds.

So perfectly taken care of, I'll sleep for another month, in **January** I'm starting to become impatient, curious to see what the early Spring will bring. I notice my roots are starting to move, encouraged by the slow warming up of the soil. Gradually, growth is stirring within me.

By the end of **February**, the first flower buds are shooting up, to see how it looks above the leaves.

March is starting and with this month my yearly fireworks are coming: my pedicels push up from my swollen buds, to unfurl their beautiful sepals. Now I'm wearing my wedding gown, to show to the world how happy I am. Winter has gone! The balmy wind and the first bees caress my flowers, to pollinate the pistils with pollen, starting the cycle of life anew.

I hope, you'll come to visit me, so you can enjoy the flowery bridal gown of myself and my congeners.

You're welcome, your liverleaf: "**Blaues Wunder**"

