

Snowdrop: *Galanthus Nivalis*,
Family: Amaryllidaceae (*amaryllis*)
Kingdom: Plantae
Order: Asparagales
Subfamily: Amaryllidoideae
Tribe: Galantheae

From the Greek for milk (*gala*) and flower (*anthos*),
Milk + Flower of the Snow.
(*Linnaeus 1753*) and the Latin: snow (*nivalis*).

Native to Southern Europe, The Middle East, and Eurasia including Turkey and Iran.

Moly.

During their wanderings, Odysseus and his crew arrive at the island of Aeaea. Starving and exhausted, they split into two groups to search for resources. One group comes across a palatial home, where a beautiful woman emerges and welcomes the men inside for a feast. All but one of them follow her. This is the sorceress Circe — the daughter of the goddess of magic, Hecate — and as she prepared the feast for the men

'She made for them a potion of cheese and barley meal and yellow honey with Pramnian wine; but in the food she mixed baneful drugs, that they might utterly forget their native land. Now when she had given them the potion, and they had drunk it off, then she presently smote them with her wand and penned them in the sties'.

Terrified by what he sees, the one crew member who did not enter Circe's home, races into the wilderness to tell Odysseus of the horrible incident that transformed the men into pigs. Determined to rescue his men from this witchcraft, Odysseus travels through a forest to Circe's home. Along the way, he encounters a young man who reveals himself to be Hermes, a god associated with being both a messenger and a healer. Hermes, aware of potential danger, digs up a plant in a nearby meadow and hands it to Odysseus, saying:

'Here, take this potent herb, and go to the house of Circe, and it shall ward off from thy head the evil day. And I will tell thee all the baneful wiles of Circe. She will mix thee a potion, and cast drugs into the food; but even so, she shall not be able to bewitch thee, for the potent herb that I shall give thee will not suffer it'. So saying, [Hermes] gave me the herb, drawing it from the ground, and showed me its nature. At the root it was black, but its flower was like milk. Moly the gods call it, and it is hard for mortal men to dig, but with the gods all things are possible.

The Moly protects Odysseus against Circe's magic. He drinks her potion, eats her food and stands there as she points her wand at him. However, when she tells him to join his friends in the pigsty, he resists the spell and rushes her with his sword.¹