

## Plant Etymology corner #1

Hello, my name is Matthew Beasley and I am currently in the second year of the BINGN program. I am currently working at Nordgard Aukrust in Lom in Norway, surrounded by many beautiful plants! This has inspired me to contribute to the BINGN newsletter with information about one plant with each issue, particularly the etymology. As my favourite herb is Chervil, I thought I'd start there!

### Anthriscus cerefolium – Chervil – Kjørvel

**English** - Chervil

**Norwegian** - Hagekjørvel

**Danish** - Have-Kørvel

**Swedish** - Dansk körvel eller trädgårdskörvel

**Finnish** - Maustekirveli

**GREEK** → **LATIN**  
khairephullon → chaerephylla → chervil



As you can see above, the names of this plant in these 5 languages are rather similar; chervil, kjørvel, kørvel, körvel and kirveli. The English word chervil derives from the Old English cerfelle which derives from Latin chaerephyllum which then derives from Greek khairephyllon; this is made up of **khairein** "to rejoice" and **phyllon** "leaf" referring to the pleasant aroma of the leaves. Other names in the contemporary tongues of Western Europe also derive from Latin cherifolium for example; Portuguese cerefolho and French cerfeuil. Northern Europeans often call the plant more precisely as garden chervil (Norwegian hagekjørvel), because it is not indigenous and cannot survive in the wild. It is often called the Herb of Joy or Herb of Rejoicing. In European folklore, the eating of chervil was encouraged because it was said not only to aid digestion, but to inspire cheerfulness. It certainly brings a smile to my face!