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NEUROLOGICAL STAMP

***Convallaria majalis* (lily of the valley) (also known as Our Lady's tears, ladder to heaven)**

Herbalists as far back as the 16th century recommended the blossoms of the lily of the valley soaked in wine for strengthening the memory and soothing inflamed eyes. Soaked in water it was said to ease gout. These remedies (called golden water) were so highly valued that they were stored in gold or silver vessels. Another of the age old uses of the plant was for treatment of heart ailments. Like fox-glove, the plant strengthens the heart beats although its effects are milder.

Subject to many legends its white flowers became a symbol of the Virgin Mary, was called Our Lady's tears, and appeared in many paintings of the Virgin. The even, step-like, arrangements of the flowers along the stalk inspired medieval monks to name the plant ladder to heaven; and its fragrance was said to attract nightingales.

Lily of the valley is shown here on a stamp issued by Bulgaria in 1968 (Stanley Gibbons 1853, Scott 1730) illustrating medicinal plants and herbs.

L F HAAS