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### *Alnus tenuifolia*

[Synonyms : *Alnus incana* var. *occidentalis*, *Alnus incana* subsp. *tenuifolia*, *Alnus incana* var. *virescens*, *Alnus occidentalis*, *Alnus* x *purpusii*]

**MOUNTAIN ALDER** is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native to western North America it has purple catkins.

It is also known as *Aune du Canada* (French), California alder, Green alder, River alder, Rhombic-leaved alder, Thinleaf alder, Western alder, and White alder.

The flowers are pollinated by the wind.

Warning – fresh inner bark can be poisonous and can cause vomiting but dried inner bark is benign.

*Tenuifolia* is made up of Latin *tenuis* (thin, fine, slight, slender) and *-folia* (leaved) components meaning ‘slender-leaved’.

Local North American Indian tribes have used the inner bark to obtain an orange dye.

When growing on streambanks mountain alder’s extensive root system helps to stabilise the soil. It is hardly surprising therefore that environmentalists recommend the cultivation of mountain alder on embankments (particularly in heavy damp soil) not only because it grows rapidly but also because its roots can prevent soil erosion.

The bark yields a dark dye which ranges from orange through red to brown and the wood has provided local fuel.

Medicinally, there are records which suggest that local herbalists have used mountain alder to treat tuberculosis.