

You are viewing one of thousands of biographies – click below for more, including Search box and access to Plant associated organisations.

[Plant Biographies](#)

[Bibliography](#)

Apios americana

[Synonyms : *Apios americana* var. *turrigera*, *Apios apios*, *Apios tuberosa*, *Glycine apios*, *Glycine tuberosa*]

POTATO-BEAN is a perennial twining climbing vine. Native to eastern North America it has pea-like, violet-scented, reddish-brown flowers.

It is also known as *Apios*, Bog potato, Chocolate, Cinnamon vine, Dacotah potato, Dakota potato, *Glycine*, Groundnut, Ground pea, Hopnis, Indian bean, Indian potato, *Its* (Pawnee North American Indian), *Mdo* (Dakota North American Indian), Micmac potato, *Nu* (Omaha and Ponca North American Indian), Pig potato, Potato pea, Rabbit vine, Sagabon, *Tdo* (Winnebago North American Indian), Trailing pea, Traveler's delight, Tuberos-wistaria, White-apple, Wild bean, and Wild wistaria.

Americana means 'of or from America (North or South)'.

The long roots with their edible tuberous enlargements (like a chain of beads) were gathered from the wild and were an important source of food for local North American Indian tribes among them the Iroquois, Winnebago, Chippewa, Pawnee, Ponca, Dakota, Potawatomi, Cherokee and Seminole. They fulfilled a role equivalent to that attributed to the potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) in many Western countries today. Both tubers and seeds (nuts) were eaten cooked (especially boiled or roasted) – and the Delaware tribe even ground the dried roots for bread flour, while others such as the Mohican Indians used it to thicken soups and stews. Records indicate that one of the favourite preparation methods of the Menominee tribe included the use of maple sugar (*Acer saccharum*). The roots were also stored by many tribes such as the Huron, Menominee, Meskwaki and Delaware for use in the Winter and as emergency rations.

It is recorded that the Pilgrim Fathers, who landed in North America from Europe in the early 17th Century relied similarly on the wild-growing potato-bean in their early years (especially in their first Winter in their new home).

At the turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries research is in progress on the domestication of the wild plant with a view to producing not only a viable commercial crop but also plants suitable for growth in private gardens. These trials include the investigation of various cooking methods and uses for flour made from the seeds and tubers.