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Ceanothus integerrimus

[Synonyms : *Ceanothus andersonii*, *Ceanothus californicus*, *Ceanothus integerrimus* var. *californicus*, *Ceanothus integerrimus* var. *macrothyrsus*, *Ceanothus integerrimus* var. *puberulus*]

DEER BRUSH is a deciduous shrub. Native to the western North America it has tiny white, pink or dark blue flowers.

The flowers are pollinated by bees.

Integerrimus is derived from Latin *integri-* (whole, entire) meaning ‘entire or with leaf edges untoothed’.

Deer brush seeds were eaten by the North American Concow Indian tribe.

Young shoots were used by several Indian tribes including the Karok, Maidu, Concow and Mewuk for basketry, and the Mewuk Indians also used deer brush to make ladles.

As a medicine the plant featured in Karok Indian tribal remedies for easing some childbirth problems.

Locally the ground seeds (raw or cooked) have provided flour.

It is hardly surprising to note in view of the common name that deer graze on the foliage – and they are said to especially enjoy the flexible branches which have a wintergreen-flavoured bark.

The flowers yield a green dye.

Like blueblossom (*Ceanothus thyrsiflorus*) the whole crushed plant (particularly the flowers which impart a pleasant fragrance, or the unripe seed cases) produces a lather in water. Authorities note that as this will remove dirt successfully, unless it is oily, it makes a desirable skin soap.

Medicinally, local herbalists have prepared a tonic with the bark.