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Ceanothus thyrsiflorus

[Synonyms : *Ceanothus bicolor*, *Ceanothus elegans*, *Ceanothus thyrsiflorus* var. *repens*]

BLUEBLOSSOM is a evergreen shrub or tree. Native to south-western North America it has small fragrant, pale to dark blue (rarely white) flowers with yellow stamens.

It is also known as *Amerikaanse sering* (Dutch), Blueblossom ceanothus, Blue brush, California lilac, Californian lilac, and California wild lilac.

The flowers fade and drop rapidly if cut. If they are rubbed in water they create a lather (an alternative soap).

Thyrsiflorus is derived from Greek *thyrsos*- (wand) and Latin *flora* (flower) components with reference to the thyrses or rods carried by Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, meaning ‘dense flower-spike that is broad in the middle’.

Some of the North American Indian Pomo tribe include the flowers in the dance wreaths seen at their Strawberry Festival – and they also used them (fresh or dried) as a kind of soap. While for the Poliklah Indians a leaf and twig decoction provided a wash for newborn babies.

The flowers yield a green dye.

Like deer brush 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.