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Chimaphila maculata

[Synonyms : *Chimaphila acuminata*, *Chimaphila dasystemma*, *Chimaphila guatemalensis*, *Chimaphila maculata* var. *acuminata*, *Chimaphila maculata* var. *dasystemma*, *Pyrola maculata*]

SPOTTED WINTERGREEN is an evergreen shrub. Native to eastern North America it has strikingly, white-mottled leaves and waxy, sweetly-fragrant white to pale pink flowers. It is also known as Dragon's tongue, Lion's tongue, Mottled pipsissewa, Pepsissewa, Piperidge, Pipsissewa, Ratsbane, Rat's-vein, Rheumatism root, Spotted pipsissewa, Striped prince's pine, Striped wintergreen, Waxflower, Whiteleaf, Wild arsenic, and Wintergreen.

The flowers are pollinated by flies and short-lipped bees.

Maculata is derived from Latin *macula* (spot, stain) meaning 'spotted or blotched'.

The leaves provided a snack food for North American Cherokee Indians.

As a drug it was used by both the Nanticoke and Cherokee tribes for easing fever and some recommended a plant decoction for countering hysteria. According to records however the Cherokee employed spotted wintergreen for many other remedies – as well as using it as a rat poison. The tribe seems to have had faith in its ability to ease pain in babies and to resolve some urinary disorders. It was also applied externally in poultices or as a wash in the treatment of various skin disorders, pain generally, tuberculosis, rheumatism and cancer.

Medicinally, herbalists have used spotted wintergreen to treat diarrhoea, fluid retention, venereal disease, nervous disorders, rheumatism and skin ailments, as well as employing it as a stimulant and tonic.