

Clintonia borealis

[Synonyms : *Dracaena borealis*]

BLUEBEARD LILY is a perennial. Native to eastern North America it has small, cream or yellowish-green flowers.

It is also known as Balsam bell, Beadlily, Bearberry, Bear plum, Bear's corn, Bear tongue, Blue bead, Bluebead lily, Bluebeard, Blueberry, Calf corn, Canada mayflower, Clintonia, Clinton's lily, Cornflower, Corn lily, Cow tongue, Dogberry, Dragoness plant, Heal all, Hound's tongue, Northern clintonia, Northern lily, Poison berries, Straw lily, Wild corn, Wild lily-of-the-valley, Wood lily, Yellow beadlily, Yellow bluebeadlily, Yellow clintonia, and Yellow wood-lily.

Warning – the berries are believed to have poisonous properties.

Borealis is derived from Greek *boreo* (north) meaning 'northern'.

Various records refer to the use of plants made by North American Indian tribes. It seems that the Menominee (and some of the Chippewa Indians) believed on the one hand that dog's poisoned their teeth on bluebeard lily to help them kill their prey, and on the other that if a human-being was bitten by such a dog, the plant could also be used as an antidote to draw out the poison.

In a more conventional context, some of the Algonkin tribe rubbed their hands and faces with crushed leaves as a mosquito repellent.

Various North American Indian tribes have respected the plant for medicinal properties. It was used externally on sores, wounds and burns by the Chippewa Indians and some of the Algonkin tribe. The Iroquois not only used it as an ingredient in treatments for diabetes but also prescribed a plant decoction for some heart disorders. It was used by some of the Chippewa internally to treat some female problems, and the tribe recognized it too as an antidote for dog bites from animals that had eaten the plant.

The edible young leaves have provided a savoury flavouring for food, as well as a salad or cooked vegetable.