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*Comandra umbellata*

[Synonyms : *Thesium umbellatum*]

**BASTARD TOADFLAX** is a semi-parasitic perennial. Native to eastern North America it has small, greenish-white flowers.

It is also known as False toadflax, Star toadflax, and Toadflax.

Warning – some authorities believe the fruit should not be eaten as they may be poisonous. (They are however enjoyed by some animals.)

*Umbellata* is derived from Latin *umbella* (parasol) meaning ‘bearing flattish-heads of flowers with stalks arising from one place’.

Not only were the fruit eaten by local North American Indian tribes as part of their normal diet (and children, like those in the Okanagan-Colville tribe, sucked the flowers for their nectar) – but both they and the incoming European settlers also recognized it as a famine food.

It was a source of medicine for a few tribes. The Meskwaki Indians used it to treat colds and some lung ailments, and the Cherokee tribe included it in remedies for various kidney problems and applied the plant’s juice to cuts and sores.