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Cornus canadensis

[Synonyms : *Arctocrania canadensis*, *Chamaepericlymenum canadense*, *Cornella canadensis*, *Cornus canadensis* var. *dutillyi*, *Cornus herbacea* var. *canadensis*]

BUNCHBERRY is a prostrate evergreen shrub. Native to North America, it has occasionally pinkish-tinged, creamy-white, petal-like leaves (bracts) and leaves which turn bronze, red and purple in Autumn.

It is also known as Baked apples and pears, Bearberry, Bunchberry dogwood, Bunch plum, Crackerberry, Creeping dogwood, Cuckoo plum, Dogberry, Dwarf cornel, Dwarf dogwood, Frothberry, *Kanadanruohokanukka* (Finnish), *Krypkornell* (Swedish), Low cornel, Pigeonberry, Pudding berry, Squawberry, and Trailing dogwood.

Canadensis means 'of or from Canada or north-eastern North America'.

Records indicate that the olive-like mealy, slightly bitter-tasting scarlet fruit were eaten raw by local North American Indian tribes, including the Alaskan Inuits, the Makah Indians, Hanaksiala, Nitinaht, Abnaki, Chippewa, Potawatomi, some of the Kwakiutl, Haisla and Salish Indians. Authorities have also noted that in the Hesquiat tribe the fruit, especially prepared, were enjoyed by tribal elders during feasts, that some of the Algonkin and Cree Indians ate the berries like a snack (or in modern terminology fast food) and that both the Quileute and Hoh tribes used them during rituals. Early settlers are believed to have cooked them in puddings.

Quileute Indians also smoked bunchberry leaves at the same time.

Some of the North American Indian tribes found medicinal uses for the shrub. The Iroquois used it to treat tuberculosis and fever – and they and the Algonkin turned to it as a remedy for colds. The latter also used it to treat some female disorders, while the Abnaki and Delaware tribes chose the shrub for the treatment of pain. Some of the Chippewa Indians recommended it for easing wind in children, the Paiute and some of the Carrier tribes chose it as a remedy for some eye problems, and the Montagnais Indians included it in treatments for paralysis. It was also a remedy for convulsions for both the Micmac and Malecite Indians. The shrub was applied externally on sores by the Thompson tribe, and both the Hoh and Quileute tribes took it as a tonic.

In the bird world grouse are particularly partial to the fruit and leaves, and several species of deer also feed on bunchberry.

Bunchberry was introduced to Britain in 1758 by Peter Collinson (1694-1768), the English botanist and naturalist.