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### *Crataegus laevigata*

[Synonyms : *Crataegus laevigata* subsp. *microphylla*, *Crataegus laevigata* subsp. *palmstruchii*, *Crataegus orientalis*, *Crataegus oxyacantha*, *Crataegus oxyacantha* subsp. *walokochiana*, *Crataegus oxyacanthoides*, *Crataegus palmstruchii*, *Mespilus laevigata*, *Mespilus oxyacantha*]

**MIDLAND HAWTHORN** is a deciduous shrub or tree. Found in North Africa, western Asia and Europe (including Britain), it has rotten-meat smelling, small white flowers with red stamens.

It is also known as *Ban sangli* (Punjabi), Bread and cheese, Common English hawthorn, *Draenen Ysbyddaden* (Welsh), English hawthorn, *Épine noble* (French), *Hagtorn* (Swedish), Hawthorn, *Hloh dvousemenný* (Czech), *Hloh obecný* (Czech), *Hloh obyčajný* (Slovak), *Hloh ostrotrnný* (Czech), *Hložek* (Czech), *Hložinky* (Czech), *Pluháč* (Czech), May, *Pyöröliuskaorapihlaja* (Finnish), Quick, Quickset thorn, Quickthorn, *Rundhagtorn* (Swedish), Silver hawthorn, Smooth hawthorn, Two-styled hawthorn, Whitethorn, and *Zweigriffeliger Weissdorn* (German).

Warning – it should not be taken internally if suffering from low blood pressure.

*Laevigata* is derived from Latin *levis* (smooth) meaning ‘smooth or polished’ with reference to the leaves.

In Britain this species preceded hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) in the hedgerows where it could be found from Saxon times. Not only once picked does it issue its putrid smell more quickly than hawthorn, but it also tends to bloom earlier than its close relative and although, for the English, it may well have been the original May Flower its earlier blooming is likely to have made it an unreliable focus for that day.

In England many of the old trees used to serve as meeting places – such as one in Norfolk, known as the Hethel Old Thorn.

The wood is used commercially for turning.

Medicinally, the flowers were once used by European herbalists, like those of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), for removing splinters. In India fruit extract has been used to treat heart disorders.