

Fremontodendron californicum

[Synonyms : *Fremontia californica*, *Fremontia californica* subsp. *crassifolia*, *Fremontia californica* var. *diegensis*, *Fremontia californica* var. *integra*, *Fremontia californica* var. *napensis*, *Fremontia californica* subsp. *obispoensis*, *Fremontia californica* var. *typica*, *Fremontia californica* var. *viridis*, *Fremontia crassifolia*, *Fremontia napensis*, *Fremontia obispoensis*, *Fremontodendron californicum* subsp. *crassifolium*, *Fremontodendron californicum* subsp. *napense*, *Fremontodendron californicum* subsp. *obispoense*]

TREE POPPY is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to south-western North America it has yellow flowers.

It is also known as California flannelbush, California tree poppy, Californian slippery elm, California slippery elm, Flannel bush, Fremontia, Leatherwood, and Slippery elm.

Californicum means 'of or from California' (United States).

The Kawaiisu North American Indian tribe used the wood to make babies' cradles.

Its bark fibre seems to have been valued by several North American tribes for making twine, cordage or rope that was then used in varying ways. For the Yokut and the Shoshoni it was used as rope to secure stored acorns, while the Kawaiisu seem to have used it for making rabbit nets and carrying nets, as well as for forming the smoke holes in their Winter homes.

Authorities have noted also that the Kawaiisu Indians took an inner bark infusion as a purgative.

John Frémont (1813-1890) collected specimens of tree poppy during his second Californian expedition in 1843 and 1844. Apparently his plant hunting carried him over a thousand miles in areas then unexplored by botanists and the tree poppy was one of the specimens that survived two subsequent depressing disasters. The first was when he lost a significant number of his discoveries when bales fell from a mule as he traversed gorges in the Sierra Nevada mountains. The second saw a further large number disappear on his homeward journey through Kansas River floods

In the early 1840s the Cornish plant collector, William Lobb (1809-1864) set out for South America. In 1849 he also visited California in southern North America twice. During the whole period he had been sending seeds back to his sponsors, Veitch, who had established a nursery near the English town of Exeter in Devon, and following his Californian forays he added seeds of the tree poppy to his finds.

The tree poppy was used by early settlers in California to line their boots to obtain added warmth.

Medicinally, in the past the sticky substance (mucilage) from the inner bark was used locally in poultices and the tree poppy was also included in remedies to ease sore throats.