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Gaylussacia baccata

[Synonyms : *Adnaria resinosa*, *Andromeda baccata*, *Decachaena baccata*, *Decachaena baccata* var. *glaucocarpa*, *Decamerium resinosum*, *Gaylussacia baccata* forma *baccata*, *Gaylussacia baccata* var. *glaucocarpa*, *Gaylussacia baccata* forma *leucocarpa*, *Gaylussacia resinosa*, *Gaylussacia resinosa* var. *glaucocarpa*, *Gaylussacia resinosa* var. *leucocarpa*, *Vaccinium baccatum*, *Vaccinium decamerocarpon*, *Vaccinium resinosum*]

BLACK HUCKLEBERRY is a deciduous shrub. Native to eastern North America, it has tiny pinkish or pale red flowers.

It is also known as High-bush huckleberry, Huckleberry, and Whortleberry.

The flowers are pollinated by bees.

Baccata is derived from Latin *baca* (berry) meaning 'berry-like or pulpy and juicy'.

The small sweet-tasting shiny black berries provided food for several North American Indian tribes including some of the Chippewa. The Cherokee made the fruit into jam, and they and the Iroquois also used them for pies and puddings. For the Iroquois they were an ingredient in a porridge (as well as in sauce and soup) and both tribes preserved them in various ways for later use.

Iroquois rituals connected with health and prosperity included the use of the berries.

As a source of medicine black huckleberry's leaves were used by the Cherokee as a remedy for dysentery and some kidney disorders, and the Iroquois took the berries to enhance the working of the liver and the condition of the blood.

Today the shrub is cultivated as an ornamental plant. It is also grown as a tool to counter soil erosion.

Locally the fruit are eaten raw or cooked in pies, preserves or muffins.

In the wild the seeds are dispersed widely by birds (including grouse, quail and turkey) and animals such as bears, foxes and squirrels which enjoy the fruit. Deer, hares and rabbits browse on the stems.