

Juniperus horizontalis

[Synonyms : *Juniperus horizontalis* var. *argentea*, *Juniperus horizontalis* var. *douglasii*, *Juniperus horizontalis* var. *glauca*, *Juniperus horizontalis* var. *variegata*, *Juniperus hudsonica*, *Juniperus prostrata*, *Juniperus repens*, *Juniperus sabina* var. *procumbens*, *Juniperus virginiana* var. *prostrata*, *Sabina horizontalis*, *Sabina prostrata*]

CREeping JUNIPER is a trailing evergreen shrub. Native to eastern North America it has small, bluish cones.

It is also known as Blue rug juniper, Creeping savin, *Genévrier horizontal* (French), *Kriech-Wacholder* (German), Prostrate juniper, *Savinier* (French), *Sévigné* (French), Shrubby red cedar, and Utah juniper.

There are many creeping cultivated varieties.

Horizontalis means ‘horizontal (along or just above the ground)’.

Some of the North American Chippewa tribe made a tea from the leaves.

Creeping juniper played a significant role in the ritual of some North American tribes. In the Blackfoot tribe some dancers’ headdresses bore seven light bluish-black berry-like cones as a symbol of the ‘Bunched Stars’, sprigs were used to decorate an altar, a branch played a symbolic role for one of the dancers, and branches were also spread for another dancer in the Sun Dance. While for some of the Chippewa tribe juniper had to be placed on graves. Young leaves and twigs were burnt by the Crow Indians for incense when incantations were being made, and burning leaves also provided ceremonial incense for the Cheyenne who apart from anything else drew comfort from this during thunderstorms.

The shrub was not devoid of superstitious association. The Cheyenne used the wood to make flutes which when played were believed to be able to convince a girl that she was attracted to a would-be lover.

The wood was of economic value to some of the Chippewa Indians as they traded it as fencing posts or pulpwood for paper.

Blackfoot Indians bathed their horses in a root solution to make their animals’ coats glossy.

The shrub was also a source of medicine for one or two North American Indian tribes. Both the Montana Indian and Blackfoot tribes used creeping juniper to treat various kidney disorders. The Cheyenne on the other hand took it to ease coughs, colds and fevers, and they also prescribed it for some female problems and as a sedative.