

*Lactuca canadensis*

[Synonyms : *Galathenium elongatum*, *Lactuca canadensis* var. *canadensis*, *Lactuca canadensis* var. *integrifolia*, *Lactuca canadensis* var. *latifolia*, *Lactuca canadensis* var. *longifolia*, *Lactuca canadensis* var. *obovata*, *Lactuca canadensis* var. *spinulosa*, *Lactuca canadensis* var. *typica*, *Lactuca caroliniana*, *Lactuca elongata*, *Lactuca elongata* var. *longifolia*, *Lactuca longifolia*, *Lactuca sagittifolia*, *Lactuca steelei*, *Sonchus pallidus*]

**CANADA LETTUCE** is an annual or biennial. Native to eastern North America and to the Caribbean, it has small daisy-like, pale yellow flowers.

It is also known as American wild lettuce, Blue devils, Blue lettuce, Butterweed, Devil's ironweed, Devil's weed, Fall lettuce, Fall weed, Fireweed, Florida blue lettuce, Horse weed, Lettuce, Milkweed, Prickly lettuce, Tall lettuce, Tall wild lettuce, Trumpet milkweed, Trumpets, Trumpet weed, Wild lettuce, and Wild opium.

Only a few flowers open at the same time.

Warning – the plant should only be used under the supervision of a qualified practitioner.

Some authorities believe that normal intake can cause drowsiness, excessive quantities can cause restlessness – and overdoses could be fatal.

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

The common name Horseweed came about because horses obviously enjoy eating it.

The North American Cherokee Indians cooked the dandelion-like leaves for a green vegetable.

The plant was also a source of medicine for several North American tribes. It was used to treat pain by the Iroquois and Cherokee tribes, and the latter prescribed it both as a stimulant and a sedative as well. The Iroquois Indians took it for some kidney disorders and they applied it to cuts that bled severely. The Menominee on the other hand rubbed the plant's milky sap on the extremely uncomfortable effects of a brush with poison ivy, while the Chippewa Indians applied the sap to warts.

Young leaves and stems have been eaten locally as a boiled vegetable (the water it is cooked in turns milky and needs to be replaced) or raw added to salads. By many it has also been viewed as a famine food.

The plant is relished by horses.

Medicinally, the plant has been used locally to treat fluid retention and pain. It has also been prescribed as a laxative, has been taken to cause sweating and has been used to counter insomnia and ease some nervous disorders.