

Lycopodium complanatum

[Synonyms : *Diphasiastrum complanatum*, *Diphasiastrum complanatum* var. *glaucum*, *Diphasium complanatum*, *Lepidotis complanata*, *Lycopodium complanatum flabelliforme*, *Lycopodium flabelliforme*, *Stachygynandrum complanatum*]

AMERICAN GROUND PINE is a creeping evergreen perennial. Native to Europe, Russia and the United States, it has long yellowish-green stems covered with scale-like leaves. It is also known as American clubmoss, Christmas clubmoss, Ground cedar, Ground pine, Issler's clubmoss, *Jämna* (Swedish), *Keltalieko* (Finnish), *Plattlumner* (Swedish), and Trailing Christmas-green.

Warning – American ground pine is potentially poisonous and, similarly to stag's-horn clubmoss (*Lycopodium clavatum*), could affect the central nervous system.

American ground pine is considered to be threatened in the wild in Britain.

Complanatum means 'levelled or flattened'.

Like those of stag's-horn clubmoss (*Lycopodium clavatum*) the spores in the cones of American ground pine will burn as brightly as powdered sulphur. This quality has been used by for staging theatrical explosions and for fireworks.

Blackfoot North American Indians used the whole plant as a mordant to fix particular dyes.

The Blackfoot tribe also respected medicinal virtues in the plant. Bleeding wounds and nosebleeds were stemmed with the fine spore powder, and the tribe also used the plant for some lung disorders and venereal disease. On the other hand some of the Chippewa tribe used the dried leaves as a stimulant, and the Iroquois used the plant as an ingredient in a medicine given for some female problems.

Medicinally, herbalists used to recommend it for treating jaundice, diarrhoea, scurvy, fluid retention, gout, ulcers, rheumatism and chronic diseases generally. It is little used in Western medicine today but the Chinese take it as a tonic and as a remedy for some skin disorders.