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*Maianthemum dilatatum*

[Synonyms : *Convallaria bifolia kamtschatica*, *Maianthemum bifolium*, *Maianthemum bifolium dilatatum*, *Maianthemum bifolium* var. *kamtschaticum*, *Maianthemum kamtschaticum*]

**MAY LILY** is a perennial. Native to northern temperate regions it has many very small, fragrant greenish-white flowers with prominent stamens.

It is also known as *Ekorrbär* (Swedish), False lily-of-the-valley, Mayflower, One leaf, *Oravanmarja* (Finnish), *Schattenblümchen* (German), Twin-leaf lily of the valley, Twoleaf false Solomon's seal, Wild lily-of-the-valley, and *Zweiblättrige Schattenblume* (German).

Warning – the fruit if taken in quantity are purgative.

In Britain may lily is a protected species in the wild.

*Dilatatum* is derived from Latin *dilato* (spread out, extend) meaning 'spread out, dilated, widened or expanded'.

In North America many of the Indian tribes, including the Kitasoo, Hesquiat, Haisla, some of the Kwakiutl, and the Hanaksiala all ate the berries – and the Bella Coola and some of the Salish Indians picked them to eat occasionally. (The Makah tribe chewed the roots as an aphrodisiac.)

It is also recorded that the Oweekeno Indian tribe observed frogs eating the fruit.

The plant offered medicine for one or two North American tribes. It was applied to wounds by the Oweekeno, Nitinaht, and Hesquiat Indians, and the latter two also used it as a remedy for boils and sores. Nitinaht Indians put the plant on burns too. Apart from this the Hesquiat tribe prescribed it in treatments for tuberculosis – and the Quinault tribe used it to ease sore eyes.