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Phlox subulata

[Synonyms : *Phlox setacea*]

MOSS PHLOX is a mat-forming, evergreen perennial. Native to north-eastern North America it has small dark eyed, white to red or purple flowers with slightly protruding stamens. It is also known as Alexander's surprise, Flowering moss, Ground pink, *Mossflox* (Swedish), Moss pink, Mountain pink, Mountain phlox, *Plamenka šídlolistá* (Czech), and *Plamenka šídlovitá* (Czech).

Subulata is derived from Latin *subula* (shoemaker's awl) meaning 'awl-shaped'.

Mahuna North American Indians took the plant to treat rheumatism.

The American botanist, John Bartram (1699-1777), wrote to his English peer, Peter Collinson, on 10th December 1745 to say that he was sending 'one sod of the fine creeping *Lychnis*' (today one of the *Silene* genus). This turned out to be moss phlox. However it seems that it gained little significant attention from British gardeners until the Victorian era in the following century.