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Phoradendron serotinum

[Synonyms : *Phoradendron eatonii*, *Phoradendron flavescens*, *Phoradendron flavescens* var. *orbiculatum*, *Phoradendron leucarpum*, *Phoradendron macrotomum*, *Phoradendron serotinum* var. *macrotomum*, *Viscum flavescens*, *Viscum serotinum*]

AMERICAN MISTLETOE is a semi-parasitic evergreen shrub. Native to eastern North America it has tiny yellowish-green flowers.

It is also known as American Christmas mistletoe, Birdlime, False mistletoe, Golden bough, Mistletoe, and Oak mistletoe.

The fruit ripen a year after forming in the previous Autumn.

Warning – it has poisonous berries (particularly for children). It should not be used without the supervision of a qualified practitioner. The berries can cause acute gastroenteritis and heart failure, as well as also dermatitis (itching, burning, stinging, reddened or blistered skin) on contact. The berries are poisonous for livestock.

Serotinum is derived from Latin *serotini*- (late) component meaning ‘late in flowering or ripening’.

The North American Seminole Indians used American mistletoe during ceremonial rituals.

Medicinally, this poisonous plant has been used by several North American Indian tribes including the Houma. The Cherokee Indians used it for epilepsy and to treat high blood pressure, headaches and some female disorders. It was used by the Mendocino Indians for abortion and easing toothache. The Creek tribe favoured it for various lung problems and tuberculosis, and it was a Seminole remedy for rheumatism.

This shrub serves as the American Christmas mistletoe.

American mistletoe was adopted as a state flower emblem in the United States by Oklahoma in 1893. It should be mentioned however that the short clustered-groups of tiny yellowish-green flowers are inconspicuous.