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Polemonium reptans

[Synonyms : *Polemonium humile*, *Polemonium pulchellum*]

ABSCCESS ROOT is a perennial. Native to Scandinavia and eastern North America it has small light blue flowers.

It is also known as American abscess root, American great valerian, American Greek valerian, Blue bells, Blue valerian, Creeping great valerian, Creeping Jacob's ladder, False Jacob's ladder, Greek valerian, *Himmelsleiter* (German), Honey phlox, Jacob's ladder, *Kriechende Jakobsleiter* (German), *Krytblågull* (Swedish), *Niittysinilatva* (Finnish), Snake root, Spring polemonium, Sweatroot, and Sweetroot.

Reptans is derived from Latin *repto* meaning 'creeping, crawling'.

North American Meskwaki Indians used the root as an ingredient in the treatment of fluid retention.

Medicinally, abscess root used to be recommended particularly for treating fevers, coughs, colds and lung and bronchial conditions. (This would often be taken in the form of a tincture in whisky.) Like jacob's-ladder (*Polemonium caeruleum*) it is used rarely today.