

Potentilla chilensis

[Synonyms : *Fragaria chilensis*, *Fragaria chilensis* subsp. *scouleri*, *Fragaria cuneifolia*, *Fragaria grandiflora*, *Fragaria vesca* subsp. *chilensis*]

SAND STRAWBERRY is an evergreen perennial. Native to the west coast of South America (particularly Chile) and to that of North America, it has small white flowers and strawberry-like red fruit.

It is also known as Beach strawberry, Chilean strawberry, *Chileense aardbei* (Dutch), *Chileerdbeere* (German), *Chile-Jordbær* (Danish), Chiloe strawberry, Coast strawberry, *Fraisier du Chili* (French), *Fresa* (Chilean, Spanish), *Fresa chilena* (Spanish), *Fresa de Chile* (Spanish), *Fresal de Chile* (Spanish), *Frutilla* (Spanish), *Frutilla silvestre* (Chilean, Spanish), *Furagaria chiroenshisu* (Japanese), Hawaiian strawberry, Hybrid strawberry, *Jahoda čilská* (Slovak), *Jahodník čilský* (Czech), *Jättesmultron* (Swedish), *Lahueñe* (Chilean, Spanish), *Morango-do-chile* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Morangueiro-do-Chile* (Portuguese), *'Ohelo papa* (Hawaiian), Pine strawberry, *Satrobeery suan* (Thai), *Şili çileği* (Turkish), Wild strawberry, and *Zhi li cao mei* (Chinese).

Chilensis means 'of or from the island of Chiloe off the Chilean coast'.

Authorities have noted that the fruit featured in a flower dance performed by young girls in a branch of the Pomo North American Indian tribe.

The berries were eaten by many North American tribes including the Kitasoo, Yurok, some of the Pomo, the Tolowa, Klallam, Hesquiat and Nitinaht tribes. Apart from eating some of the fresh fruit the Salish Indians also used the dried leaves for making a tea, the Makah tribe ate the fresh fruit and also made jams and preserves from it, and apart from eating them fresh the Oweekeno also made the berries into jam. The Quinault Indians treated the fruit as a delicacy, while the Quileute tribe not only ate the fruit raw or cooked but also enjoyed them after fish. The Hoh tribe like others ate the prepared the fruit fresh or cooked.

Chewed leaves provided a poultice for burns for the Quileute Indians.

A French officer by the name Frézier is said to have come across the sand strawberry in the Andean lowlands and introduced it to France. Although much emphasis is often placed on the British development of commercial varieties of strawberries during the 19th Century it must be noted that the respected French botanist and horticulturist, Antoine Nicolas Duchesne (1747-1827) carried out pioneering work in the previous century and at the age of only 19 published his *Histoire naturelle des Fraisiers*.

The fruit are cultivated in the Andes and eaten locally on both American Continents. This plant is particularly noteworthy as it is a parent of many of the cultivated varieties available today. The large, succulent sweet-tasting fruit (that can be eaten raw or cooked) can be made into jams and other preserves – and a tea can be made from the leaves.

Sand strawberry has been cultivated as ground cover – with the added advantage of the edible fruit.

These fruit are enjoyed by birds.

Medicinally, herbalists have used the plant to control period cycles.