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Purshia mexicana

[Synonyms : *Cowania alba*, *Cowania mexicana*, *Cowania mexicana* var. *dubia*, *Cowania mexicana* var. *stansburiana*, *Cowania stansburiana*, *Purshia mexicana* var. *mexicana*, *Purshia mexicana* var. *stansburiana*, *Purshia stansburiana*]

MEXICAN CLIFF ROSE is an evergreen shrub. Native from south-western North America to Mexico it has small and strongly fragrant, white to pale yellow flowers with many stamens.

It is also known as *Awèèts'áál* (Navajo North American Indian), Buck brush, Cliff rose, Quinine bush, and Stansbury cliffrose.

Mexicana means 'of or from Mexico'.

The North American Havasupai Indians crushed the bark to make a soft mattress in their babies' cradles – and they also used the soft bark as tinder. While the Hualapai Indians made clothing from the inner bark fibre others have used it for making sandals, rope and sleeping mats as well.

The plant was a source of medicine for several North American Indian tribes including the Gosiute and some of the Apache. Both the Havasupai and Paiute tribes looked upon it as a laxative, while the Shoshoni valued it for treating kidney disorders, measles and smallpox. The Paiute and Shoshoni tribes prescribed it in remedies for venereal diseases, and the Havasupai, Paiute and Shoshoni all turned to it for a cure for colds. Hualapai Indians used it to treat rheumatism too. For the Navajo it offered a remedy for nausea, stomach upsets, coughs and skin problems.

Deer, cattle and sheep will all browse on this shrub.

Mexican cliff rose is cultivated as an ornamental plant.

Recent research indicates that the plant may contain drugs which could be helpful in controlling tumours.