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Pyrola elliptica

[Synonyms : *Pyrola compacta*, *Thelaia elliptica*]

SHINLEAF is an evergreen perennial. Native to northern North America it has lily-of-the-valley smelling, greenish-white flowers.

It is also known as Lesser wintergreen, Oval-leaved wintergreen, Thin-leaf pyrola, Wax flower, Waxflower shinleaf, White wintergreen, Wild lily-of-the-valley, and Wood lily.

Elliptica means ‘elliptic (curved sides longer than wide and broadest in the middle) or oval’ usually with reference to leaf shape.

The plant was a source of medicine for several North American Indian tribes including the Chippewa. Montagnais Indians used it as a stimulant, the Nootka tribe applied it externally for treating various cancers, and the Mohicans used it for oral problems including sore throats. Cherokee Indians applied it to wounds, and they and the Iroquois both used it for various skin disorders. The Iroquois also prescribed it for treating indigestion, blood diseases and rheumatism, and they gave it to babies suffering from epileptic fits or convulsions.