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Rhododendron ferrugineum

[Synonyms : *Chamaerhodendron ferrugineum*]

ALPENROSE is an evergreen shrub. Native to central Europe it has small pink or red flowers. It is also known as *Almrausch* (German), Alpine rhododendron, Alpine rose, *Hojaranzo* (Spanish), *Laurier-rose des Alpes* (French), *Pěnišník rezavý* (Czech), *Rhododendron ferrugineux* (French), Rock rhododendron, *Rhododendron rezavý* (Czech), *Rhododendro rustkolora* (Esperanto), *Rosage* (French), *Rose des Alpes* (French), *Rostbladig alpros* (Swedish), *Rostblättrige Alpenrose* (German), *Ruostealppiruusu* (Finnish), Rusty-leaved alpenrose, and Rusty-leaved rhododendron.

Galls on the branches are made by the larvae of insects.

The flowers are pollinated by bees particularly.

The galls are steeped in oil to yield Oil of marmot.

Warning – the flowers and leaves can be poisonous (causing diarrhoea and vomiting) and should only be taken internally under the supervision of a qualified practitioner.

Ferrugineum is derived from Latin *ferrum* (iron) meaning ‘rusty-coloured or reddish-brown’ with reference to the shoots and the undersides of the leaves.

In Italy the leaves have been used to treat rheumatism and gout (as with yellow rhododendron, *Rhododendron chrysanthum*). Today it is used in homoeopathic treatments and can be an ingredient in a few proprietary medicines.