

*Rhus copallina*

[Synonyms : *Schmaltzia copallina*, *Toxicodendron copallinum*]

**DWARF SUMACH** is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native to eastern North America it has small greenish-yellow flowers and leaves that turn to rich red or purple in Autumn.

It is also known as Black sumac, Common sumac, Common sumach, Dwarf sumac, Flame-leaf sumach, Mountain dwarf sumach, Mountain sumac, Mountain sumach, Mountain wing-rib sumach, Shining sumach, Smooth sumach, Southern sumac, Upland sumach, Varnish sumac, Varnish sumach, Whiteflower dwarf sumach, Winged sumac, Wing-rib mountain sumac, and Wing-rib sumac; and in flower language it is said to be a symbol of adoration.

*Copallina* means ‘gummy or resinous’.

Local North American Indian tribes have harvested the stickily hairy, tart-tasting red berries for use (when sweetened) in a drink, and some of the Cherokee ate the berries.

The leaves have been used for tanning and dyeing – and some of the North American Dakota tribe included them in a tobacco mixture reserved for ceremonial functions. Cherokee Indians obtained a red and a black dye from the fruit.

Dwarf sumach was a source of medicine for several North American Indian tribes, including the Koasati and some of the Chippewa. The Creek Indians treated dysentery with a decoction of the roots, and some tribes used them to treat piles. The plant provided the Delaware Indians with treatments for oral problems, venereal disease and skin disorders, and the Cherokee used it to ease vomiting and as a remedy for some female ailments, urinary disorders and sunburn.

Although the fruit are not particularly attractive to birds, they are enjoyed by moose and deer. For humans the fruit have been used to make a gargle.

Authorities have suggested that with their high Vitamin A content the fruit could supply a valuable emergency source of food for humans.