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*Salvia columbariae*

**CALIFORNIAN CHIA** is an annual or perennial. Native to southern North America it has small purplish-blue flowers.

It is also known as California sage, Chia (English, North American Indian), Golden chia, Wild sage, and Winter oat.

*Columbariae* is derived from Latin *columba* (dove, pigeon) meaning ‘of doves or dove-like’.

The flowers are a source of nectar for honey.

Local North American Indian tribes such as the Mohave, Cahuilla, some of the Tohono O’Odham and the Kawaiisu used the seeds to make a drink. (When the flowers died they gently beat the dried heads with a stick and knocked out the seeds into flat baskets – which according to the intended use were then steeped in water or cleaned, dried and ground.) The seeds provided flour for the Mahuna, some of the Tohono O’Odham, the Pomo, Paiute, Luiseño, Yavapai and Tubatulabal tribes with which they made porridge, cake or soups. Authorities have noted that they were a staple part of the diets of the Costanoan, Cahuilla, Mohave and Pomo Indian tribes – and that the Diegueño Indians used them as flavouring.

For several North American Indian tribes this plant was a source of medicine. Costanoan Indians used it to treat fever, and the Diegueño valued it as a stimulant. But it seems to have been of especial importance in providing an eye cleanser for the Mahuna, Cahuilla, Costanoan and Kawaiisu Indian tribes, and the Cahuilla also applied it to skin disorders.