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*Stillingia sylvatica*

[Synonyms : *Sapium sylvaticum*]

**QUEEN'S DELIGHT** is a subshrub. Native to south-eastern North America (from Virginia to Florida and Texas) it has small yellow flowers.

It is also known as Cockup hat, Cocyshat, Marcony, Marcory, Nettle potato, Queen-of-the-lights, Queen's root, Silver leaf, Stillingia, Yaw-root, and Yaw weed.

Warning – queen's delight must be used with care. Large doses (particularly of the fresh root) can irritate the mucous membranes and cause purging and vomiting. It is poisonous for some animals.

*Sylvatica* means 'wild, of or from woods or forests'.

North American Cherokee Indians used the shrub to treat venereal disease.

Queen's delight is referred to as a black dye in the poem for which the American poet and novelist, Stephen Vincent Benét (1898-1943) is probably best known, *John Brown's Body* published in 1928.

I will dye my heart  
In a pot of queen's delight, in the pokeberry sap,  
I will dye it red and black in the fool's old colors  
And send it to him, wrapped in a calico rag,  
To keep him warm through the rain.

Established as a medicinal plant in the southern United States in the 1820s queen's delight is now used only in folk medicine. It has been shown that both the root (less than twelve months old) and tinctures of it are more effective when fresh and it has been employed in the treatment of syphilis, skin diseases, bronchitis, laryngitis and croup. Today queen's delight is used in proprietary herbal remedies.