

Triosteum perfoliatum

[Synonyms : *Triosteum angustifolium*, *Triosteum majus*]

WILD COFFEE is a perennial. Native to eastern North America it has small, red to greenish flowers.

It is also known as Bastard ipecac, Bastard ipecacuanha, Cinque, Dr. Tinker's weed, False ipecac, Fever root, Feverwort, Genson, Gentian, Horse gentian, Horse ginseng, Indian purge, Narrow feverwort, Perfoliate fever root, Sweet bitten, Sweet bitter, Tinker's weed, White gentian, White ginseng, Wild ipecac, Wild ipecacuanha, and Wood ipecac.

Perfoliatum means 'with leaves surrounding or embracing the stem'.

It is thought to have gained the name Tinker's weed because it appears to have been much admired in the past by itinerant herbalists for alleged medicinal qualities.

Early settlers on the North American Continent used the dried, roasted and ground berries as what is said to have been a creditable alternative for coffee.

Some North American Indian tribes including the Creek Indians valued wild coffee as a source of medicine. Both the Meskwaki and Iroquois tribes used it as a laxative, and the former also applied it in a poultice to snake bites. Cherokee Indians used it to cause vomiting, and recommended it as a treatment for fever and a remedy for some skin problems.

Iroquois Indians also valued it as a treatment for pneumonia, stomach upsets, urinary problems, period disorders, colds, fluid retention and venereal disease, and they also used it to cause sweating when this was needed.

Authorities note that early German settlers in America who set up home in Pennsylvania dried and roasted the berries as a substitute coffee.