

*Vitis vulpina*

[Synonyms : *Vitis cordifolia*, *Vitis cordifolia* var. *vulpina*, *Vitis cordifolia* var. *foetida*, *Vitis cordifolia* var. *sempervirens*, *Vitis illex*, *Vitis riparia*, *Vitis vinifera* var. *vulpina*]

**CHICKEN GRAPE** is a deciduous climbing vine. Native to eastern North America it has sweetly scented greenish flowers.

It is also known as Dune grape, Frost grape, *Frostvin* (Swedish), June grape, Racoon grape, *Réva vlčí* (Czech), River bank grape, River grape, Riverside grape, Riverside vine, Sweet-scented grape, and Winter grape.

*Vulpina* is derived from Latin *vulpes* (fox) meaning ‘of foxes’, and this species is considered to have inferior fruit.

Familiar to many North American Indian tribes, including the Menominee, some of the Keresan, the Pawnee, Winnebago, Ponca, Chippewa, Dakota, Cherokee, Meskwaki, Omaha, Crow and Cheyenne the fruit were enjoyed as a food raw, dried or preserved. Iroquois Indians also used the grapes to make sauces, and the Omaha, Winnebago, Ponca, Iroquois and Pawnee Indians all stored them dried for future use including (like the Iroquois) as provisions for their hunters. Unusually records suggest the Mahuna tribe rarely ate the grapes unless they wanted to quench their thirst.

The Menominee at least are also believed to have used the seeds or the fruit juice to remove anything that lodged in the eye. Iroquois Indians used the plant to treat kidney problems, they gave it to both adults and children for various urinary disorders – and they chewed a piece of the vine to stop hiccups. It offered a remedy to some of the Delaware tribe for venereal disease, and the Cherokee employed it for a wash used by children suffering from some oral problems. Both the Cherokee and Iroquois tribes valued it as a treatment for blood diseases – and they (particularly Iroquois children) and some of the Chippewa also took it for stomach upsets. Chicken grape was prescribed by the Cherokee tribe for easing diarrhoea, and some liver ailments, while they and some of the Chippewa both turned to it during childbirth. Meskwaki Indian children were given a twig infusion to hold in the mouth as an antidote for poisoning, Chippewa Indians not only gave the plant to diabetics but also members of the tribe suffering from rheumatism.