

Cherokee Ethnobiology

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Gi ga u na s te tlv



BLOODROOT

Cherokee Usage

Bloodroot has been used by Cherokee for many generations, primarily as a red dye for dyeing baskets and clothing. Only a small amount of this root is needed to dye materials, and elders stress that it is important to leave a little piece of the rot behind when gathering so that the plant will be there the next time you return. Bloodroot has also been used to remove warts and ringworm, and to stop bleeding. A decoction of the root can be used in small doses for coughs, lung inflammations and croup, but should be used with extreme care since this plant is considered highly toxic.

Description

Bloodroot is a perennial that grows approximately 1 foot in height. It usually contains only one large, multi-lobed leaf and one flower with 8-12 white petals with yellow reproductive parts that emerge from March to May. Bloodroot is short-lived and goes dormant during mid summer after the seeds mature. The flowers are also short-lived with the pedals falling off shortly after pollination.

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| Where found: | Bloodroot can be found growing just about anywhere in this region. |
| Other names: | Bloodwort, Red Puccoon Root, Tetterwort, Dragons Blood, Redroot. Another Cherokee name for Bloodroot is gi-ti u-wa-ta-li (ᎦᎵ ᎠᎵᎠᎵ) which translates to male dog genitalia. |
| Taxonomy: | Kingdom - Plantae Phylum - Magnoliophyta Class - Magnoliopsida Order - Ranunculales Family - Papaveraceae Genus - <i>Sanguinaria</i> Species - <i>canadensis</i> |

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