These folios are intended to offer brief and concise information about the preparation and uses of North American botanicals...to encourage the viewing of our herbs as LIVING PLANTS, not merely abstract roughage purchased in commerce, derived from sources mysterious.

**Ceanothus Red Root**
Prepared by Michael Moore

**Ceanothus americanus**
New Jersey Tea, Red Root
Branches in flower
Arkansas

PHOTO BY ELAINE STEVENS

**Ceanothus fendleri**
Red Root, Deer Brush
Flowering branches
Arizona

PHOTO BY ELAINE STEVENS
There are other species, subspecies and hybrids of Ceanothus found in North America, but these are the dominant ones.
About Red Root...
These are widespread plants in North America, taking the shape of spiny groundcovers, forlorn shrubs, robust bushes, and even rather substantial trees (California Lilac, not used medicinally, can be quite large). The useful species share several common characteristics; the roots bear nitrogen-fixing fungi, they range in color from that of Caucasian skin to claret wine, and those plants that are most environmentally stressed, and more reliant on their peculiar fungi, are the strongest medicines.

Whether a pugnacious mat or a large bush, these Ceanothus are, at heart, a hardwood tree, and the taproots can be massive and VERY tough. *C. herbaceum* and its *C. americanus* hybrids have been referred to as Grub Roots in the midwest, where they often formed masses of plow-breaking roots, twining tortuously just below the surface of the soil.

Many species and local strains have a noticeable wintergreen scent, and in general they should not be used concurrent with anti-coagulant medication. Otherwise, Red Root is one of our great, unsung plant medicines. With its “blood-thinning” effects, and the current North American diet so heavily larded with fats, perhaps it is more useful now than in our herbal past.
CEANOTHUS (Red Root, New Jersey Tea)
Preparation and uses

**Part Used:** The whole roots, cut while fresh, and either tinctured fresh or dried for tea. The dry root pieces are VERY difficult to grind up for a macerated or percolated tincture, unless you have a sturdy drug or hammer mill.

**PREPARATIONS:**
- Cold Infusion (one ounce steeped overnight in a quart of water)
  Dosage.......... 2-4 ounces
- Strong Decoction (Same proportions as above, although a bit heat-damaged)
  Dosage.......... 2-4 ounces
- Tincture......... [Fresh Root, 1:2, Dry Root, 1:5, 50% alcohol]
  Dosage.......... 30-90 drops, to 4X a day

**SUMMARY OF CLINICAL USES:**
Weakness and bogginess in lymph pulp and nodes; Rouleau of RBC, without dysplasia, mild splenomegaly; acute tonsillitis and pharyngitis.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS**
Coagulation disorders or anticoagulant medications.

**SPECIFIC INDICATIONS**
- As a gargle in acute pharyngitis.
- Tonsillitis.
- Fibrocystic breast disease (with the elimination of all caffeine, theobromine and theophylline in diet).
- Hydrocele (with Angelica sinensis - “Dong Quai”).
- Acute mastitis (internally, with Gossypium internally, and Phytolacca externally).
- Thick and oppressive frontal headaches after fatty meals.
- Blood, chronic slow coagulation without hemopathy.
- Lymphadenitis, in chronic debility (with Astragalus or Baptisia); or cervical or under jaw.
- Mononucleosis, with widespread and inflamed nodes.
- Mononucleosis, general supportive.
- Splenitis, subacute, chronic or secondary to hepatitis.
- As a general tonic for thick, viscous blood, and RBC clumping

**CEANOTHUS FLOWERS**
- Hair tonic, as a rinse.
- A serviceable shampoo, using the fresh flowers, rubbed in warm water, with a smidgen of castile soap
Ceanothus velutinus
Snowbrush, Red Root

SOUTHWEST SCHOOL OF BOTANICAL MEDICINE
hrbmoore@mindspring.com
http://www.swsbm.com