

NATIONAL FLOWER



Bunchberry also known as Quatre-temps in French and Kawiscowimin in Cree is the national flower of Canada. Bunchberry changes with the seasons, just like Canada does, with white flowers in late spring, red berries in summer, and red leaf colour in fall. One of the smallest members of the dogwood (Cornus) family, bunchberry forms a low, carpet-like mat of leaves, up to four inches (10 cm) tall; you'll typically see it in the understory of moist, shady woods. In late spring, it produces showy "flowers" that appear a few inches above the leaves. These white flowers are modified leaves called bracts, which attract pollinators to the actual flowers in the centre. Bunchberry is largely self-sterile, which means it is dependent on pollinators, such as bumblebees, solitary bees, bee flies and syrphid flies, for reproduction. Once pollinated, it produces edible fruit, a food source for black bears, martens, snowshoe hares and other small mammals, as well as many migratory birds. Bunchberry is also a winter forage plant for caribou, elk, deer and moose.