

Plant lovers all over are rediscovering the beauty of this long forgotten Appalachian native evergreen.

GAYLUSSACIA BRACHYCERA, commonly known as box huckleberry, is a dwarf (6-8") evergreen shrub, which grows naturally on the wooded slopes of North America. A rare survivor of the last ice age, and related to blueberries, it is easily distinguished from other members of its genus by its glossy, minutely-toothed leaves, which resemble those of boxwood, and turn red in winter.

White urn-shaped flowers, sometimes tinged pink, appear in spring, followed by blue berries in summer. It is self-sterile, so single plants don't reproduce sexually. Instead, it spreads out by endlessly cloning itself. One colony in Pennsylvania covers over a mile. Given a growth rate of about 6 inches per year, that would make this single colony over 10,000 years old!

'BERRIED TREASURE' ESSENTIALS:

Scientific Name: Gaylussacia brachycera

Common Names: Box Huckleberry; Box-leaved Whortleberry **Habit:** Low-growing, spreading, shrub; 6 to 8-inches tall

Culture: Prefers dry, acidic soils, including duff; tolerates poor soil;

partial shade to sun

Reproduction: Self-sterile; plants form colonies which spread by

vegetative reproduction along root stock

Foliage: Evergreen, glossy green with minutely serrated edges;

turns red in winter

Flowers: May to June; urn shaped white flowers born on racemes

Fruit: July to August; dark blue edible berries

Uses: Groundcover and habitat restoration, near walkways or

next to porches.

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