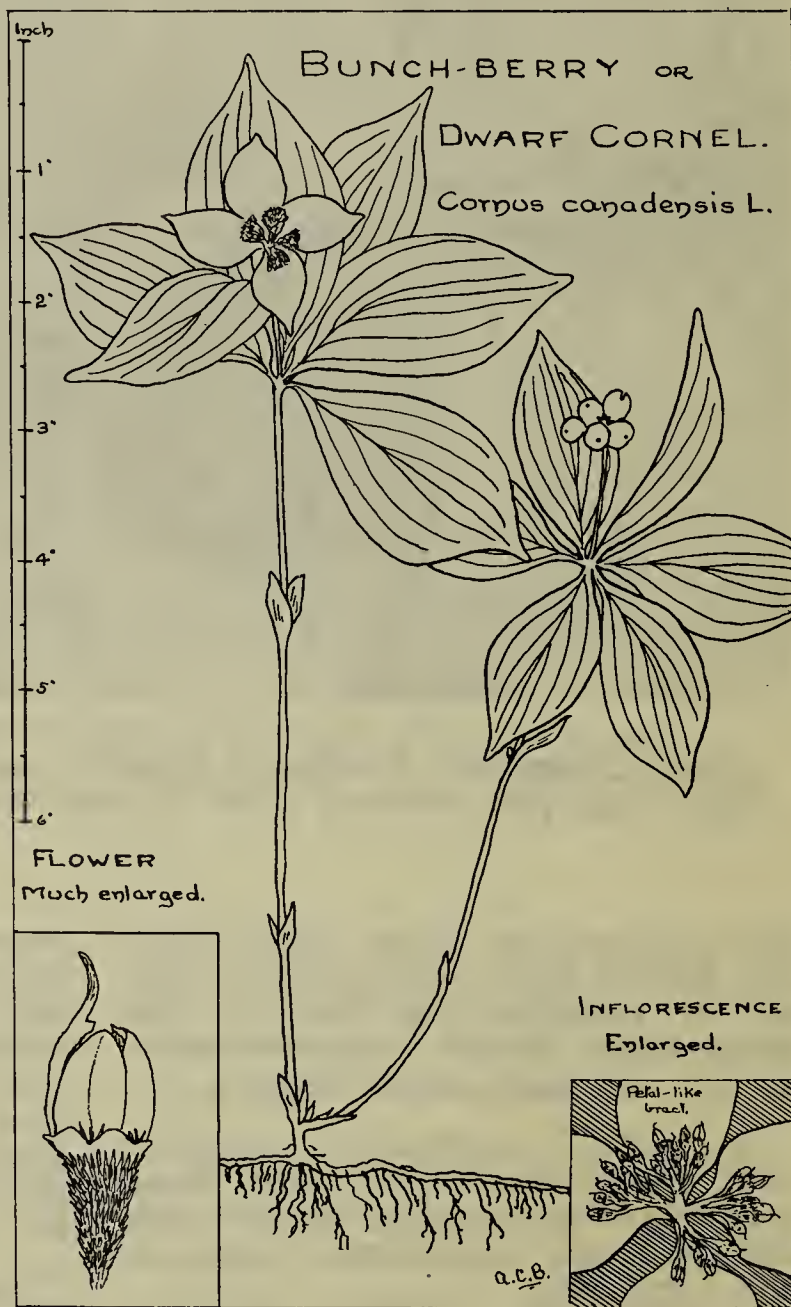


The Bunch-berry

By ARCH. C. BUDD, SWIFT CURRENT, SASK.

A fairly common plant of the forest floor of our poplar woodlands is the Bunch-berry or Dwarf Cornel, the Squaw-berry of Eastern Canada. This is a low-growing, woody based, perennial herb from 3 to 6 inches high. It bears an apparent whorl of four to six ovate leaves from one to three inches long, and one or two pairs of small bract-like leaves lower down the stem. Above the whorl of leaves, at the head of the stem, is what appears to be a white petalled flower about an inch across. This is really a cluster of tiny flowers subtended by four petal-like, white bracts. The tiny flowers, when looked at under magnification, have the calyx tube densely covered with tiny, white, glass-like hairs, and have four small membranous calyx lobes, each with a few glass-like spines. There are four flesh-coloured petals, from one of which protrudes a pinkish appendage. The fruits are a cluster of bright red berries or drupes, each about a quarter of an inch in diameter, and, though edible, they are very insipid and tasteless. These fruits were used as food by the Indians and are still used by the Eskimos. A very similar species is found in Europe and the berries were used in the Highlands of Scotland as a tonic to restore the appetite and the plant was called the "Lus-a-chraois" or plant of gluttony.



Linnaeus named this plant *Cornus canadensis*, but two botanist, Paul Archerson and Karl Graebner altered the genus name. In the playful way botanists have of giving the larger plants small names (like *Quercus* for the mighty oaks) and long names for tiny plants, they named this plant *Chamaepericlymenum canadense*. The long mouthful means "low woodbine,"

from the specific name of the English woodbine or Fragrant honeysuckle. The Bunch-berry is closely related to Red Osier Dogwood, a shrub common in bluffs, and which has pleasing reddish bark and white berries.

An artist's liberty has been taken in the sketch as it is highly improbable that a plant would bear both flowers and fruit simultaneously.