

Gaultheria trichophylla

No Image

Family: Ericaceae

Local/common names:
Data not available

Trade name: Data not
available

Profile:

An elegant small plant, growing well in sandy peat and leaf-soil. The leaves are very small and numerous produced on the sub-prostrate branches and are hairy at the margin. The pink flowers are succeeded in autumn by peacock-blue berries. It belongs to the family Ericaceae, a family that consists of 125 genera and 3000-400 species. The genus *Gaultheria* has about 135 species and consists of evergreen shrubs.

Habitat and ecology: A creeping shrub in alpine pastures, growing on rocks and banks at an elevation of 2,700-4,500 m. Occurs commonly in montane grasslands, mountain slopes and rocky places. It is distributed from Eastern Asia, along the Western Himalayas up to China.

Morphology: A spreading shrub with small leaves and much branching. Elliptic with a wedge-shaped base and succulent fruits, sky-blue in colour. Flowers widely bell-shaped, 5-6 mm long and broad, red, pink or nearly white; calyx-lobes triangular, 2 mm. Leaves hairless above and below, with conspicuous bristles on margin. Dense leaves with very short petiole. Fruits edible.

Distinguishing features: Dwarf, prostrate shrub with many branches and dense, leathery leaves; flowers are solitary, bell-shaped, red, pink or white; fruits are fleshy capsules.

Life cycle: Flowering occurs in May-June and fruiting is July-September.

Uses: Plant is the source of Indian wintergreen oil. Oil has stimulant and carminative properties. It is used in rheumatism, neuralgia and as an antiseptic. It is also used as a flavouring agent. Fruit can be eaten in both raw as well as cooked form.

Market rate: Data not available