

10. *ACTAEA PACHYPODA* EIL. (RANUNCULACEAE) — Baneberry

Medicinal perennial of the deciduous forest. Reported to be alterative, laxative, nervine, repellant. Is a folk remedy for cold, cough, congestion, debility, diarrhea, female ailments, gastralgia, headache, rheumatism. In my draft on Amerindian folk medicine³³ I note that Arikaras applied the pulverized roots to blood clots, and inflammation and abscess of the breast (the latter with puffballs), Blackfeet used the root decoction for cold and cough, Cherokee used the root tea as a gargle and to cure itch, Cheyenne used the decoction as a lactagogue, Chippewa used the root decoction for metrorrhagia, Cree used the fruit as purgative, Fox used the plant (root decoction) for parturition, urogenital disorders and, like the Cherokee, to revive patients near death. It was said to kill teeth of young people if not careful. Ojibwa used the root for stomach disorders and parturition. Potawatomi used the root decoction to purge in puerperium. Thompson used for rheumatism and syphilis.³³ Homeopaths use the roots for arthritis and rheumatism.³³

Fruits and seeds contain trans-acetic acid, "protoanemonoid" compound.

Toxicity — *Poisonous*.¹¹ Root stocks, sap, and berries markedly irritant if ingested. (The European *A. spicata* is suggested to have killed children who ingested the berries)¹⁴ Sometimes externally vesicant.⁶ A protoanemonin-like compound inflames and blisters the skin, internally produces nausea, vomiting, gastroenteritis, dyspnea, and delirium.³³

To the physician — Hardin and Arena suggest gastric lavage or emesis and symptomatic and supportive treatment.³⁴