

Lobelia tupa

Lobelia tupa is a species of *Lobelia* native to central Chile from Valparaíso south to Los Lagos regions.[1]

Lobelia tupa is an evergreen perennial plant which grows up to 4 m tall and thrives in dry soils.[1] The foliage is grey-green, with felty elliptical leaves 10–15 cm long. The flowers are red, tubular and 2-lipped and are produced in a sympodium pattern.

The plant has numerous ethnobotanical uses due to its pharmaceutically active alkaloids. The latex is used as an abortifacient, and the large, felty leaves are smoked as a narcotic with possible hallucinogenic effects - whence one of its common names, *Tabaco del Diablo* (Devil's tobacco). Ironically, this plant has been used to treat nicotine addiction because it contains the nicotine-related alkaloid Lobeline (a mixed agonist–antagonist at nicotinic acetylcholine receptors).[2][3] The Mapuche of Southern Chile consider it a sacred plant. Tupa leaves have also been found to contain chemicals that act as a respiratory stimulant.[4]

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