

Justicia pectoralis

Justicia pectoralis is an herb in the family Acanthaceae. This water-willow is widely known as tilo in Latin America and in Cuba. In Haiti it is called chapantye and zeb chapantye on Dominica and Martinique. Other folk names are freshcut,[1] chambá[2] carpintero ("carpenter"), té criollo ("Criollo tea"), curia, death-angel, masha-hari, or "piri piri". This species was described by Nikolaus Joseph von Jacquin in 1760, who provided additional data in 1763. A well-marked variety, var. *stenophylla*, was described by Emery Clarence Leonard in 1958.

Across its range it is used in folk medicine as a relaxant and general tonic.[citation needed] Additionally it is often used in ayahuasca.[citation needed]

As regards other applications, it is noted for its pleasant smell and as a source of coumarin, which it produces in plenty, and which in combination with umbelliferone is responsible for many of its notable properties. It is also admixed to epená (*Virola*) snuff to make it smell more pleasant. In particular var. *stenophylla* might also be hallucinogenic in certain preparations; it is known to wajacas (shamans) of the Krahô tribe in Brazil, who know that variety as mashi-hiri and consider it a potent entheogen, not to be taken by the uninitiated.[3][4] The wajacas (shamans) refer to the leaves of the *Justicia pectoralis* var. *stenophylla* as bole-bena meaning "Leaves of the Angel of Death." Its name likely comes from the fact it has killed three curanderos.[5]

The name "tilo" could be by association with *Tilia*, the linden trees. These are entirely unrelated eudicots whose flowers have similar relaxant properties. The water-"willows" are not relatives of the true willows either; like the lindens, the latter belong to the rosid branch of the eudicots.

