



HEATH FAMILY.

ERICACEAE.

Wintergreen.

Gaultheria procumbens.

Found during July in woods, and along the edges of woods.

The creeping stalk sends up an erect stem, leafy at the top, about 4 or 5 inches high, woody-fibred and tough, and smooth to the touch. Its color is green,—red toward the root.

The leaf is a broad oval, with a rounded tip, an obscurely notched margin, of a tough and thick fibre, and smooth, polished surface. It is ever-green: when old a dark green, often bronzy; more yellow-green, tinged with dull red, when young. The alternate leaves, on very short stems, are clustered at the top of the stalk.

The small bell-shaped flower is minutely 5-parted, and all white. The flowers, on short curving stems, grow singly from the angles of the leaves, hanging their bells downward.



The fruit is round and small, a bright cherry red in color; it ripens in the fall and remains throughout snow-time, always ready to lend its glowing color, with the bronzy leaves that surround it, to a winter bouquet from the woods. The new shoots put forth from the ground in June, and are called “youngsters” in the country; they have an aromatic, pungent flavor, and going “youngstering” is a favorite diversion of childhood. The plant is a great colonist, and year after year its plantations thrive in the same localities.



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WINTERGREEN: *Gaultheria procumbens*

Text and drawing excerpted from *Wildflowers from the North-Eastern States* by Ellen Miller and Margaret Christine Whiting, 1895
Nomenclature and Families updated.