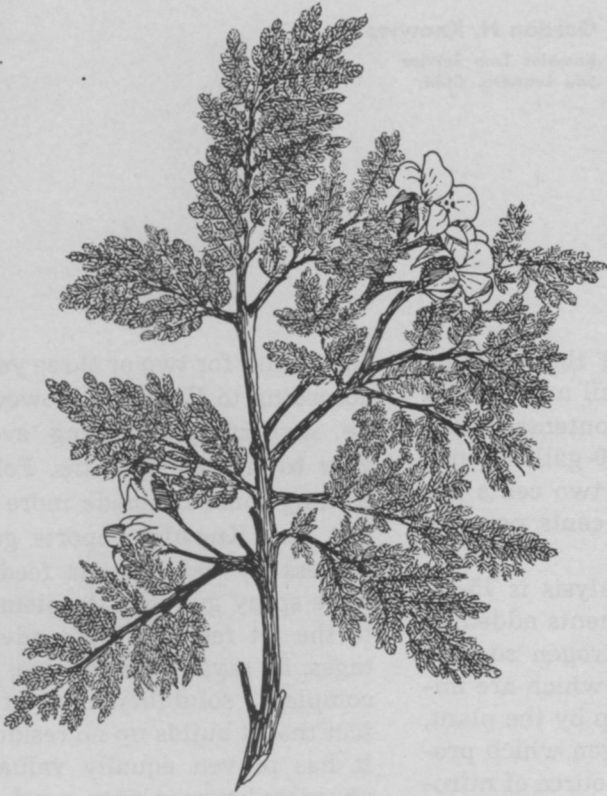


## MOUNTAIN MISERY

(*Chamaebatia foliolosa*)



Drawing from: California Range Brushlands and Browse Plants, by Arthur W. Sampson and Beryl S. Jespersen. Calif. Agric. Expt. Sta. Ext. Ser. Manual 33.

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Mountain misery (*Chamaebatia foliolosa*) belongs to the Rose Family (Rosaceae) and is one of two species native to California and Lower California. Present in open stands of ponderosa pine and mixed forests of the Sierra Nevada of California, where it occurs as an extensive ground cover, its most characteristic trait is its unusual odor. Early settlers, finding it disagreeable, aptly labeled it "mountain misery."

This 2 to 4-foot tall plant is a densely branched

shrub with thin, pliable branches. Its evergreen leaves are fern-like, fragrant (especially annoying on hot days) and covered by a sticky substance that coats everything with which it comes in contact. They are ½ to 3 inches long, several times pinnately dissected into tiny crowded segments, each usually tipped with a somewhat yellowish resin gland. The young branches are glandular-pubescent and later exfoliate, leaving a smooth bluish to brown bark. The plant's flowers are white, ½ inch wide and structured in loose terminal clusters. Flowering occurs in May and June.

Mountain misery is not detrimental except during growth periods following severe logging or forest fires or when conversion of land into grass is preferred. It may be detrimental to older trees by reducing growth rates, especially where soil is shallow and water storage is limited. However, it forms a good ground cover that protects the soil against erosion. Mountain misery is essentially valueless as a browse plant for domestic livestock but does furnish some food for deer.

After a fire, this plant sprouts from underground stems that appear to be extensive. This is an ideal time to begin control because, under post-fire conditions, it is most sensitive to the phenoxy herbicides. In addition, fire removes the dense tangle of stems and other material that make planting of forest seedlings difficult and impractical.

When it is desirable to convert these areas into grass, the land must first be burned or mechanically worked or the seedlings will fail. The time to spray is after most of the underground stems have developed sprouts, which is usually in late June or early July following a fire of the previous year. Good kills can be obtained through early August by increasing the dosage; fairly good kills can be obtained in the autumn after fall rains have occurred. Some grass does develop naturally in the burned areas and competes with the planted conifers. Therefore, it is best to spray as soon as possible after a fire and then to plant the seedling trees the following fall, winter or spring.

Mountain misery is sensitive to 2,4-D, 2,4,5-T and silvex, so it is possible to use any of these herbicides. Although the plant seems to be most sensitive to 2,4-D, mixtures of the phenoxy's are often used because of the variety of brush species to be controlled. Esters are preferable; dosages of 3 or 4 pounds per acre are recommended when selective control is not required.

Old or mature mountain misery is difficult to kill, at least without retreating it once or twice. However, an annual dosage of 4 pounds of 2,4-D, 2,4,5-T or silvex applied in June or July for 2 or 3 years is often sufficient for its eradication.