

**LABRADOR TEA (*LEDUM GROENLANDICUM*)
IN THE CEDARBURG BOG**

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The reddish-brown, woolly undersurface and strongly inrolled margins of the leaf of Labrador tea give this member of the Heath family a very distinctive appearance. *Ledum groenlandicum* is a typical member of the open bog and wet conifer forest communities of northern Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota; it extends north to Greenland and Alaska (Gleason, 1952). When I think of the open bogs of the north, sphagnum moss, pitcher plants, leatherleaf, bog rosemary, and Labrador tea come to mind as some of the most typical components of the community. In his study of the vegetation of Wisconsin, Curtis (1959) found *L. groenlandicum* present in 82% of the 71 northern conifer swamps that he studied, and in 77% of the 17 open bogs.

While large populations of leatherleaf and bog rosemary are found in the Cedarburg Bog and in other bogs even farther south, Labrador tea has not previously been reported south of northern Sheboygan County (about 40 miles to the north). The most recent collection from Sheboygan County in the UW-Madison or UW-Milwaukee herbaria is from 1924. The nearest recently collected locality for Labrador tea is Point Beach State Forest in Manitowoc Co., over 60 miles to the north. Ironically, Labrador tea was not included on our list of plants at the southern edge of their ranges in Cedarburg Bog (Reinartz and Reinartz 1981, 1982) even though a specimen had already been collected in March of 1978. In 1985 we sorted through some unmounted specimens in the herbarium and found a collection of *Ledum groenlandicum* from the northern part of the string bog.

The Labrador tea population in the Cedarburg Bog is a southern outlier from its more northerly range and is disjunct by at least 40 miles from the nearest population. The discovery of Labrador tea in the Bog raises to 11 the number of vascular plants that reach their absolute southernmost Wisconsin boundaries in the Cedarburg Bog (5 dicots, 5 monocots, 1 gymnosperm). It raises the number of vascular plants at, or near, the southern edge of their range in the Cedarburg Bog to at least 35.

It is important that the Bog's Labrador tea population be located again so that we can estimate the size of the population and monitor its condition.

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