

Coleus blumei - Painted Nettle

- Labiatae - Tropical and warm zones of Europe, Africa, Asia



COLEUS (Coleus pumas and C. blumei) is cultivated by the Mazatecs of Oaxaca, Mexico, who reputedly employ the leaves in the same way as they use the leaves of *Salvia divinorum*. Indeed, the Indians recognize the family relationship between these two genera of mints, both of the family Labiatae. They refer to *S. divinorum* as la hembra ("the female") and to *C. pumilus* as el macho ("the male"). There are two forms of *C. blumei*, which they call el niño ("the child") and el ahijado ("the godson").

These two species are native to Asia, where they are valued in folk medicine but apparently have not been used as hallucinogens. No hallucinogenic principle has yet been discovered in the 150 known *Coleus* species.

Note: Leander Valdez III has stated informally that the *Coleus* spp. is inactive and any perceived effects are the result of a placebo effect. He has tested the leaves for the presence of potentially psychoactive diterpenes and found nothing. Speaking of the Mazatec curandero Don Alejandro in his 1983 paper from the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* entitled "Ethnopharmacology of Ska María Pastora", Valdez says "The curandero also had several horticultural specimens of *Coleus* spp. growing near his house. Wasson has noted that the Mazatecs believe *Coleus* to be a medicinal or hallucinogenic herb related to *S. divinorum* (Wasson, 1962). However, Don Alejandro said the plants were not medicinal and his daughter had bought them at the market because they were pretty."

Anecdotal accounts from the internet state that infusions of 50 to 70 fresh leaves have produced mixed results.