

Flower of the Month November 2025

Cedar hairstreak on *Ceanothus velutinus* by Shana Cook

In Kyburz this summer in a clearing by the river in Kyburz, I found this butterfly on a Tobacco Brush, *Ceanothus velutinus*. I was struck by the butterfly's subtle and beautiful color variation in its wings. Cedar hairstreak, *Calliphrys gryneus* can be found in riparian, forest edges and clearings near its host plant, incense cedar, *Calocedrus decurrens*.



Calscape:

Ceanothus velutinus is a species of shrub in the buckthorn family, Rhamnaceae, known by the common names Red Root, Snowbrush *Ceanothus* and Tobacco Brush. It is native to western North America from British Columbia to California to Colorado, where it grows in several habitat types including coniferous forest, chaparral, and various types of woodland.

- It can grow up to 4 meters tall but generally remains under three, and forms colonies of individuals which tangle together to form nearly impenetrable thickets.
- The evergreen leaves are aromatic.
- The plentiful flower clusters are long

clusters of white flowers.

- The fruit is a three-lobed capsule a few millimeters long which snaps open explosively to expel the three seeds onto the soil, where **they may remain in a buried seed bank for well over 200 years before sprouting.**
- The seed is coated in a very hard outer layer that must be scarified, generally by wildfire, before it can germinate.
- Like most other *Ceanothus*, **this species fixes nitrogen** via actinomycetes on its roots.
- Butterflies and moths supported: **13** confirmed and **80** likely