



## **Jimsonweed**

All thorn-apples contain hyoscyamine, a sedative and hypnotic toxin, as well as dangerous levels of nitrates. **A very small amount, 4 to 5 grams, is fatal to a child if ingested.** Ingestion causes serious impairment of the central nervous system, producing severe hallucinations usually lasting for several days. Extreme thirst, delirium, violent behavior, and potentially a comatose state can occur. Symptoms of jimson weed appear from 30 minutes to four hours after consumption. Poisonings from ingestion of the plants are quite common. When handled, a skin rash may occur on some people.

Jimsonweed is extremely toxic to all livestock, including sheep, cattle, horses, pigs, and poultry. A small amount (0.06% of body weight) of this plant can kill an animal.

The most distinctive aspects of thorn-apples are the flowers and seedpods. The large, showy flowers are trumpet shaped with a flared opening that has 5 points. Flowers occur from June to September in a wide range of colors including white, purple, red, yellow, and orange. The flowers open fully by evening, and close again after dawn the next day. Many have a sweet, tropical fragrance. Both the flowers and seedpods form on a short stalk occurring in the angle between 2 or more stems and a leaf. The green, fleshy seedpods are 5 to 15 cm long and are often covered in spines, although some species have smooth pods. Later in the summer, the pods harden and dry out, widely scattering flat, black seeds.

Jimson weed used to be sold in powder form to provide relief to people with asthma. The plant is not illegal but was banned from over-the-counter sale in the United States in 1968 because of misuse of the product, according to the Indiana Poison Control Center.

Jimsonweed carries several names: Thorn-apple, Devil's Apple, Devil's Trumpet, Jamestown Weed, Mad-apple, Deadly Nightshade, Loco Weed, Peru-apple, Stinkweed, and Stinkwort. As with all drugs local names for a particular drug will appear. Be careful not to discredit what you are hearing just because the name doesn't fit what's on a list.