WILDERNESS IMAGES

Thevetia peruviana

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Thevetia peruviana, a poisonous shrub of the Apocynaceae family, is commonly called bastard oleander, exile oleander, tiger apple, and lucky nut. The attractive yellow flower is the reason this plant is cultivated to beautify landscapes in the tropics and subtemperate regions. The toxic glycosides contained in the plant, highly concentrated in the roots and seeds, produce digoxin-like effects and act primarily by inhibiting the Na^+/K^+ ATPase enzyme in the cardiovascular system. Although this plant is popularly found in the Indian subcontinent, poisoning is chiefly reported from India and Sri Lanka.^{1–4} Accidental poisoning occurs in children who mistakenly consume the fruit either in confusion for water chestnut or out of curiosity.^{4,5} Mixing

the dried plant parts in herbal tea has also resulted in accidental poisoning in adults.⁶ The entire plant is poisonous, and suicidal and homicidal poisoning is frequently reported with ingestion of its kernels and leaves. Knowledge of its toxicity among the locals has increased poisoning incidences from this plant, which has no specific antidote; however, it may be treated with a Fab-specific antibody in conjunction with gastric lavage using activated charcoal.⁵

References

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