

What is jimsonweed?

Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*) is a flowering annual and a member of the nightshade family that grows wild throughout the continental United States. Jimsonweed is abused for the hallucinogenic effects it produces. The primary psychoactive substances in jimsonweed, the alkaloids atropine and scopolamine, are legitimately used to treat various medical disorders.

What does jimsonweed look like?

Jimsonweed is a plant that grows to a height of 5 feet and produces white or pale purple trumpet-shaped flowers. The jimsonweed plant has large, lobed leaves on woody stems. Upon reaching maturity, the plant releases tiny black seeds from spiny capsules.



How is it used?

Typically, jimsonweed is ingested orally, usually as an herbal tea. The seeds, leaves, and flower nectar also may be eaten or smoked. Effects generally occur within 30 to 60 minutes of ingestion. The effects may persist for as many as 24 to 48 hours because the alkaloids present in the drug retard the human body's digestive process.

Who abuses jimsonweed?

It is difficult to gauge the extent of jimsonweed use in the United States because most data sources that quantify drug use exclude jimsonweed. There is evidence to suggest that teenagers are the principal abusers of the drug. Young people are particularly susceptible to jimsonweed abuse because, unlike many other illicit drugs, it is readily available and costs nothing to obtain.

What are the risks?

Use of jimsonweed produces effects including dry mucous membranes, difficulty swallowing and speaking, blurred vision, photophobia (painful sensitivity to light), hyperthermia (elevated body temperature), confusion, agitation, combative behavior, and hallucinations. Jimsonweed poisoning typically must be treated by pumping the user's stomach and administering activated charcoal to absorb the contaminants. There is no antidote for jimsonweed poisoning. Individuals who use jimsonweed put themselves at risk of seizures, coma, and death.

Other Terms for Jimsonweed

Angel's trumpet
Devil's trumpet
Jamestown weed
Loco weed
Thornapple

Is jimsonweed illegal?

Although jimsonweed is not scheduled under the Controlled Substances Act, three states (Connecticut, New Jersey, and Tennessee) have passed legislation to control jimsonweed. In addition, the Food and Drug Administration has asserted that the belladonna alkaloids in jimsonweed are neither safe nor effective in over-the-counter cough and cold inhalants.

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Questions and Answers



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