

OLEANDER, POISON

Nerium oleander

Native of the Mediterranean region. Widely cultivated in California as a highway divider bush, it is the only ornamental that will keep leaves with such minimal watering.

Flowers are pink, rose, white or yellow, five lobes.

Toxic part of plant is entire plant. Smoke from burning leaves can also be deadly.

Toxin: oleandrin, a cardiac glycoside that has digitalis like action on the heart muscle.

Symptoms: toxic if ingested, causing nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and irregular cardiac action. It can be fatal at the right dosage.

The small fruits are also very deadly.

Extraction is the best means of getting a good potent poison. This is very simple.

Materials needed for setup:

Vacuum setup: small vacuum pump (aquarium pump, etc...), sports bottle, thin rubber hose 1/8"ID, denim or cotton shirt cloth square about 5"x5", strong rubber bands to fit over mouth of sports bottle.

Pop a small hole in the upper section of the sports bottle and insert a small nipple to attach the hose. Hook the other end of the hose to the vacuum pump. Secure the cloth over the mouth of the bottle with rubber bands, leave a dip for materials that may deposit in the cloth. This method will work for both: saving the liquid or saving the solids left on the cloth.

Materials for extraction: denatured alcohol solvent, glass jar, high pan, water, oleander leaves and small branches, rubber gloves, good ventilation, glass blender.

Place 2 cups alcohol in the glass container of the blender. Add about 6-8 ounces of oleander leaves and branches to the alcohol. Blend slow then high to avoid splashing. Blend for about 30 seconds. Add the leaves in sections so it will blend evenly.

Start liquid extraction using the vacuum filter system above. Save the liquid and place in the glass jar each time you filter, discard the solids. To get more you may want to squeeze the filter each time you remove it to discard.

Place the jar of poison and alcohol in a pan filled half with water and boil the water at high. This will evaporate the alcohol and leave a syrupy poison. This poison can be used as is and is very effective or can be further purified or bleached so there is no color. Chloroform can be used in a separatory funnel to remove the chlorophyll from the mixture. This will make the syrup light green instead of dark.