



Poisonous Plants and Venomous Animals of Alabama and Adjoining States

Whit Gibbons, Joab L. Thomas, Robert R. Haynes

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Wisteria, mistletoe, oleander, milkweed, narcissus, yellow Jessamine, wild hydrangea, trillium, all are plants easily recognized by most people. But these and more than 200 other plants in Alabama and the Southeast can cause systemic poisoning if ingested by human beings and livestock. This book describes these poisonous plants, including various mushrooms, and discusses the toxic properties, symptoms of poisoning, habitat occurrence, and geographic distribution. One chapter describes plants that cause dermatitis or other allergic reactions-plants including poison ivy, poison sumac, ragweed, clematis, and red maple.

Other chapters of the book discuss venomous animals-not only the six venomous snakes of the Southeast but also certain jellyfishes, centipedes, spiders, scorpions, stinging caterpillars, wasps, hornets, bees, catfishes, stingrays, and others- that might be encountered by people during recreation or work. The authors describe habitat occurrence, geographic distribution, and general life history and behavior for these animals. Numerous color photographs and drawings of both plants and animals are included for identification, as well as hundreds of range maps.

The authors encourage an appreciation for the protective mechanisms that help plants and animals defend themselves against predators or other threats. Although people must be able to recognize a poisonous plant or venomous animal in order to avoid suffering unwary contact, the book reassures the reader that Alabama's flora and fauna gives us little cause to worry on a relative scale. The information provided increases our understanding of and admiration for these species and their environments.

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