

Is Lonicera Nitida poisonous to livestock? Extracts from Nibblers online discussion group

Dear All

Is there anyone out there who can confirm whether or not Lonicera nitida is poisonous to livestock, I've asked around and done a search on the internet but have found no conclusive answer. It's also called Japanese honeysuckle, poor mans box, fly box and probably a lot of other things as well. It is a honeysuckle and comes from China apparently arriving over here in 1908 and has been widely planted as game cover as well as hedging.

If anyone has any experience of livestock grazing it, please could you let me know if the animals are still on their legs. Thanks

Catherine Hosie

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Catherine,

I don't have any scientific information on this, or any particularly strong evidence of any kind, but would suggest that it might be slightly poisonous, but is probably not particularly toxic. This assumption is based simply on the facts that:

a) the species doesn't even appear in Cooper & Johnson's 'Poisonous Plants in Britain and their effects on Animals and Man' (MAFF, 1984)

b) the above publication does state that "Other members of the family [Caprifoliaceae] are popularly considered to be poisonous, e.g. honeysuckle (Lonicera spp.), danewort, wayfaring tree, guelder rose and queries relating to these plants, especially their berries, are often received by the veterinary and medical professions. However, the plants must be considered harmless or of very low toxicity as no definite reports of their causing poisoning have been found..."

Chris Britt

ADAS

Catherine

Haven't seen any mention of Lonicera nitida specifically, but the berries of some other honeysuckles (L.periclymenum, L.xylosteum, L.caprifolia) are apparently of low toxicity, causing gastro-intestinal upset, vomiting and diarrhoea if eaten in large quantities.

(Source: David Lang's 'Complete Book of British Berries')

James

ADAS
