



Largeleaf Lantana

Lantana camara

Lantana is a branching shrub up to 6 feet tall, with spreading, ascending branches usually having a few small prickles. New growth has square stems. The branches are opposite and arise from leaf axils. The oval leaves are rough and have serrate edges.

The many-flowered heads are on long stems usually arising from the axils of the leaves, and are often of two colors. There are pink and white, yellow and orange and orange and red varieties. Some of the newer ornamental varieties have single-colored flowers. The clustered, round fruits are about 1/8 inch in diameter and are black when ripe.

Distribution and habitat

This shrub was widely planted as an ornamental as the state was settled. It is still a common shrub and has escaped in many areas. It often grows under brush and along fences, where birds apparently deposited the seeds, in all areas except deep East Texas, the western panhandle and the Trans-Pecos area. Regions: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Toxic agent

Triterpenes lantadene A and lantadene B from largeleaf lantana are responsible for the toxicity of the plant, which affects cattle, sheep, goats, horses, dogs and humans.

The degree of liver injury produced by the plant directly reflects the amount of lantana ingested. Low levels give slight liver damage, producing increases in liver enzymes present in the serum. Higher amounts result in cholestasis and microscopic changes in the liver. Very high doses result in widespread liver necrosis or death of liver cells.

Livestock signs

Although horses usually do not exhibit signs of photosensitization, the other clinical signs are similar in all species and include:

- Sluggishness
- Weakness
- Bloody diarrhea
- Jaundice (yellow whites of the eyes, yellow skin; yellow fat and liver after death)
- Secondary photosensitization

Integrated management strategies

Livestock should not be forced to consume lantana. Good range management with adequate palatable forage will prevent excess consumption.

Allow poisoned animals to remain in the shade and give them sun-bleached hay, feed and water.

