

CESTRUM NOCTURNUM Linn.

DAMA DE NOCHE

? *Cestrum parqui* Usteri

Local names: *Dama de noche* (Sp., Tag.); *huele de noche*, *galan de noche* (Sp.); *night blooming cestrum* (Engl.).

Dama de noche is widely cultivated in the Philippines for its sweet-scented flowers, which bloom at night. It was introduced from tropical America.

This ornamental plant is an erect or somewhat climbing, smooth shrub usually 2 or 3 meters in height, with long, often-drooping branches. The leaves are oblong-ovate to oblong-lanceolate, 8 to 10 centimeters in length and pointed at the tip. The flowers are numerous, slender, yellowish-green, about 2.3 centimeters long, and borne in lax, axillary and terminal inflorescences (cymes) 7 to 10 centimeters long.

The leaves and fruit are official in the Mexican (3,4) Pharmacopoeias.

According to Watt and Breyer-Brandwijk dama de noche is toxic to stock. They quote Chase and Walsh, who report that cuttings, when eaten by animals, may produce poisoning. The symptoms are dullness, tachycardia, high temperature suppression of urine, and slowing of the respiratory rate. Death occurs with coma after slight convulsions. Chase states that in experiments the plant does not always poison stock; he considers it toxic only when dry. He states also that cattle will not eat the plant when it is given.

Martinez and Standley report that in Mexico an extract of the plant has been employed as an antispasmodic, especially for the treatment of epilepsy. Planchon and Collin state that in the Antilles the fruit is used for epilepsy.