TOXICITY TO GOATS OF *IPOMOEA CARNEA*

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**SUMMARY**

Four Nubian goats were fed fresh green leaves of *Ipomoea carnea* at the rate of 3 lb/animal/day. All the animals showed general weakness, tremors, paresis of the hind limbs and lateral recumbency and died within 75 days of first showing symptoms. The most outstanding lesions were focal hepatic necrosis and congestion of the brain.

**INTRODUCTION**

*Ipomoea carnea* is a member of the family *Convolvulaceae*. The plant is of tropical origin, coarse and quick growing (MacMillan, 1956; Robbie, 1960). It is widely distributed in Northern Sudan and is commonly found in both urban and rural areas. *I. carnea* does not seem to be prevalent in other parts of Africa but is widely distributed in India (Cowen, 1960) and tropical America (MacMillan, 1956).

*I. carnea* is considered foreign to the Sudan. The information obtained from Khartoum Botanical Garden indicates that the plant is of Latin American origin, being introduced to the Garden in 1947. It is from this Garden in Khartoum that the plant is believed to have been propagated to other localities in this country.

The plant is ornamental (Michaël, 1965) and it grows into a sturdy bush which can be as high as ten feet or even more (Fig. 1). *I. carnea* is evergreen and blooms only for a couple of months, July and August in the Sudan. The plant produces masses of green buds from which protrude the shiny funnel-shaped flowers (Fig. 2) which have no perfume. In Khartoum Province, the plant is commonly referred to as “Awier”, a descriptive term indicating its straggling nature. In provinces of Western Sudan (Kordofan and Dar Fur), the term “Gam barah” is commonly applied to it, depicting its uncontrollable, quick growth. Indeed, it is so resistant to drought that it can grow lavishly anywhere, along valleys or open lands, even in localities where pasture plants can hardly be detected. In the Sudan, the plant is commonly grown on houses and makes a fine show covering a trellis or along verandahs. However, the plant is increasingly being grown to provide shelter from strong winds and sand storms, particularly around villages, cultivated lands or animal pens. The plant is browsed by goats, sheep (Fig. 3) and other species of domestic animals when pasture becomes scarce.

The motive behind the present investigation was stimulated by increasing complaints regarding the toxicity of *I. carnea* to domestic animals from different localities of the country. The plant has been incriminated as toxic to livestock by several veterinarians in the field, but these assumptions have never been confirmed. The information obtained suggested the occurrence of toxicity in most species of domestic animals, particularly in goats. The problem is of particular importance in large towns where citizens are almost entirely dependent on goats for their milk supply. Further
Fig. 1. Bushes of *Ipomoea carnea* (suburbs of Khartoum city).

Fig. 2. Leaves and flowers of *Ipomoea carnea*. 

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