

224. *MENISPERMUM CANADENSE* L. (MENISPERMACEAE) — Moonseed

Birds eat the fruits readily, but “contrary to popular belief what a bird eats is not necessarily safe for humans.”³⁴

Reported to be alterative, cyanogenetic, diuretic, laxative, nervine, poison, stomachic, sudorific, tonic, moonseed is a folk remedy for cancer, debility, gout, scrofula, skin ailments, syphilis, venereal diseases.^{32,33}

Contains the alkaloid dauricine $C_{38}H_{44}N_2O_6$, presumably, tetrandrine $C_{38}H_{42}N_2O_6$, and *circa* 1.7% viburnitol. Above-ground parts contain acutumine $C_{19}H_{24}NO_6$, the rhizome acutomidine, daurinoline, *N'*-desmethyldauricine, magnoflorine, an aporphine *N*-methylindocarpinmethiodide, the protoberberine dehydrocheilanthifoline. Seeds contain *circa* 16% oil with a high percentage of unsaturated fatty acids and 13.1% protein, 2.6% ash.

Toxicity — The fruits are dangerous if eaten in quantity.³⁴ “Giftdroge”.³³ The fruits, resembling grapes, have been eaten by children; Kingsbury reported fatalities in Ohio and Pennsylvania.¹⁴

To the physician — Hardin and Arena suggest gastric lavage or emesis and symptomatic treatment.³⁴