

227. *METHYSTICHODENDRON AMESIANUM* R. E. Schultes (SOLANACEAE) — Culebra

Used by the Inga and Kamsa Indians of Colombia as a medicine.⁴ According to Sibundoy Indians, this narcotic must be taken only during the waning of the moon. The intoxication is resorted to only for very difficult or important cases of divination, prophecy, or therapy.²⁰¹

The leaves and flowers are plastered onto tumors and swellings, especially of the joints.⁴ Reported to be intoxicant and narcotic.³² Also, used for persistent chills and fever, perhaps, advanced tuberculosis. Bristol found the Sibundoy Indians use it for colds, cramps, erysipelas, infections, myalgia, rheumatism, and swellings.²⁰²

Active principles are solanaceous alkaloids of the tropane series. Leaves and stems yield *circa* 0.3% total alkaloids (80% scopolamine, some atropine, and two other alkaloids). The high proportion of scopolamine may account for the high psychotropic potency. Scopolamine may produce excitement, hallucinations, and delirium, even at therapeutic doses, while doses of atropine border on toxic before hallucinations and central excitations occurs.⁵⁸

Toxicity — “Dangerously active narcotic tree.” Death of one witch doctor has been attributed to an overdose. Intoxication usually lasts two full days and may persist for four — with a long period of complete lack of consciousness.²⁰¹