

A seed suppository is applied for pains of the uterus. After narcotic principles are expressed from seeds, an edible oil, gums, and resins are also obtained. Seeds are also anodyne and narcotic, and have been used for centuries for such purposes. The narcotic is so strong that washing ones feet in it is said to induce sleep.<sup>30</sup> Chinese apply the plant externally for neuralgia and odontalgia.<sup>16</sup> Homeopaths prescribe the tincture for amaurosis, angina pectoris, asthma, bladder paralysis, bronchitis, chorea, coma, cough, delirium tremens, diarrhea, dysmenorrhea, enteritis, epilepsy, epistaxis, erotomania, eye affections, fever, hemoptysis, hemorrhage, hiccup, hydrophobia, hypochondria, lochial suppression, mania, meningitis, mental afflictions, neuralgia, nightblindness, nymphomania, paralysis, paralysis agitans, parotitis, pneumonia, psychoses, rage, schizophrenia, sleep disorders, and visual defects.<sup>30,33</sup> Hocking<sup>179</sup> notes that henbane has been used as a sedative in delirium, epilepsy, hypochondria, hysteria, insomnia, melancholia, nervous fever, paralysis, and priapism. It is used as an anodyne in angina, arthritis, ataxia, cephalgia, colic, gastralgia, gout, lead poisoning, orchitis, swellings, and teething. Further, it was used as an antispasmodic in asthma, chorea, constipation, cough, croup, orchitis, pertussis, and tetanus.

Young plants contain more hyoscyne and less hyoscyamine; in mature plants, hyoscyamine is the main active alkaloid (especially in the petiole). Leaves contain 0.04 to 0.08% total alkaloids, roots 0.16%, seeds 0.06 to 0.1%.<sup>58</sup> Choline, mucilage, resin, and tannin are also reported. Potassium nitrate is presumed to cause the characteristic sparking effect when the leaf is ignited. Seeds contain about 25% fatty oil and a little volatile oil. One report suggests that dry seeds contain 21.2% protein and 38.9% fat.<sup>21</sup> *Hager's Handbook* adds for the leaves apoatropine, atropine, cuscohygrine, choline, tetramethylputrescine, methyl pyrroline, methyl pyrrolidine, pyridine, tropine, scopine, and scopoline. In addition to the usual amino acids, there is a bitter glycoside hyoscypicrin, a butyric acid ester, coumarin, wax. Old literature adds bi- and trimethylamine and scopetol.<sup>33</sup>

**Toxicity** — Classified by the FDA as an unsafe poisonous herb,<sup>62</sup> containing the alkaloids atropine, hyoscyne (scopolamine), and hyoscamine. People poisoned by ingesting the root, confusing them with parsnip or chicory, reported seeing red for 2 or 3 days. Convulsions and mania have resulted from smoking the leaves. Symptoms of poisonings include watering of the mouth, headache, nausea, rapid pulse, convulsions, coma, and death.<sup>34</sup>

**To the physician** — Hardin and Arena recommend gastric lavage (4% tannic acid solution) or emesis, symptomatic and supportive.<sup>34</sup> Hocking<sup>179</sup> says caffeine or morphine may be used as an antidote, with care.