

**CAHFS
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Spotlight on...



Oleander: Beautiful but Toxic

Name: Oleander
Scientific Name: *Nerium oleander*

Description: Large evergreen shrub known for its hardy nature, drought resistance and free blooming flowers. Red, pink and white blooms appearing in spring and fall. Oleandrin is the most commonly diagnosed plant poisoning in livestock in California. Dried oleander leaves in hay can be confused with eucalyptus leaves.



Oleander
Nerium oleander

Distribution: Oleander is a widely planted ornamental bush found throughout the west where ever it is protected from hard freezes.

Toxic parts: All parts including leaves stems flowers and roots are poisonous. Oleandrin, the toxic chemical in oleander, is a cardiac glycoside. Fresh plants parts are generally unpalatable, becoming less so when dried.

Signs and Symptoms of Poisoning: Gastric distress, irregular heart rate, and sudden death.

Testing available at CAHFS: Oleandrin toxin testing is available at CAHFS. The best matrices for testing are serum or ingesta. Liver, heart tissue, urine or feces have also been useful. Oleandrin can also be tested in plant material.

Plant identification testing is available at CAHFS to confirm presence of oleander leaves or other plant parts. Whole leaves or large fragments of leaves are most useful in identifying oleander.

See the lab tests and fee page for test information and pricing.

Links:
ANR: Livestock Poisoning Plants of California
<http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/Details.aspx?itemNo=8398>

Pet Poison Hotline: <http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com>

