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### *Lantana camara*

[Synonyms : *Lantana aculeata*, *Lantana antidotalis*, *Lantana armata*, *Lantana armata* var. *guianensis*, *Lantana camara* var. *aculeata*, *Lantana camara* var. *flava*, *Lantana camara* var. *hybrida*, *Lantana camara* var. *mista*, *Lantana camara* var. *moritziana*, *Lantana camara* var. *mutabilis*, *Lantana camara* var. *nivea*, *Lantana camara* var. *sanguinea*, *Lantana glandulosissima*, *Lantana hispida*, *Lantana horrida*, *Lantana mista*, *Lantana moritziana*, *Lantana mutabilis*, *Lantana urticifolia*]

**LANTANA** (Dutch, English) is an invasive evergreen shrub. Native to tropical America (particularly Jamaica) it has tiny, lemon- (some say sage-)scented, white through yellow to red flowers.

It is also known as *Arippu* (Malayalam), Bahama tea, *Bonbonyen* (Creole), *Bunga tahi ayam* (Malay), Bush lantana, *Centè manis* (Indonesian), Cherry pie, Common lantana, Curse of India, *Gewone Lantana* (Afrikaans), *Kam kung* (Thai), *Katu-hinguru* (Singhalese), *Kembang satek* (Sundanese), *Kembang telek* (Javanese), *Libora* (Czech), Measle bush, *Mukigi* (Kikuyu), Prickly lantana, *Pulikampa* (Telugu), Red sage, *Sauge* (French), Surinam tea plant, Tick-berry, *Wilderoosmaryn* (Afrikaans), Wild sage, and Yellow sage; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of 'I am unyielding', and rigour.

The flowers attract butterflies. The colour of the flowers deepens with maturity.

Warning – an extremely poisonous plant (particularly the leaves and unripe berries) which can cause abdominal pain, vomiting, blood circulation failure, liver disorder, jaundice, diarrhoea, photosensitivity, muscular weakness and death. The leaves can cause dermatitis. It is also poisonous for some animals, particularly for cattle and sheep, but not for goats or birds.

*Camara* is a local South American name for this species.

Stems have been made into toothbrushes in north-western Malaysia.

In parts of south-eastern Asia the fruit have provided as a food flavouring to which children seem especially partial.

Outside its natural habitat lantana has acquired an aggressive name. In parts of the United States where it has been introduced (particularly Hawaii) and also in parts of south-eastern Asia, including, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, the growth of lantana has been so vigorous that it is viewed as an invasive weed. In Hawaii botanists believe it could be threatening 822 species with extinction and attempts are now being made to control it biologically.

Medicinally, local herbalists have used the stems and leaves to treat asthma, coughs, colds, some skin disorders and wounds. In India it has also been used in remedies for rheumatism, malaria and tetanus.