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Schoenocaulon officinale

[Synonyms : *Asagraea officinalis*, *Helonias officinalis*, *Melanthium sabadilla*, *Sabadilla officinalis*, *Veratrum officinale*, *Veratrum sabadilla*]

SABADILLA is native to Mexico.

It is also known as Cevadilla.

Warning – the plant is extremely poisonous. It can paralyse heart action and lead to death. In addition if applied to broken skin it can cause violent pain and irritation. On unbroken skin it can cause tingling and numbness followed by coldness and anaesthesia. In Britain it is a prescription only medicine.

Officinale means ‘of the shop (usually the apothecary’s or herbalist’s)’. Certain plants used for medicinal purposes, whether of actual or legendary value, were kept readily available and acquired this name.

The seeds have been known in Europe since 1752. They are used locally to kill vermin, are lethal for house-flies and have been used in insecticide.

Sabadilla has been used in veterinary medicine.

Medicinally, although it is extremely poisonous (whether the skin is touched or it is ingested) it used to be taken internally in minute quantities to treat worms, neuralgic ailments and inflammatory diseases such as rheumatism or gout. It was also an ingredient in ointments and in a preparation that was used to kill vermin in the hair.