



Friends of SNOW CANYON

What's That Plant???

Sacred Datura is one of the desert's most recognizable plants. Although it looks like it belongs in a tropical rainforest, this species is indigenous to the southwestern United States. The striking flowers are perhaps the largest of any native plant in Utah. This plant was a favorite subject of artist Georgia O'Keeffe.



Sacred Datura or Jimson Weed

Datura wrightii

Solanaceae — Nightshade Family



BEWARE...

ALL plant parts of Datura contain dangerous levels of toxic chemicals that can be fatal if ingested by humans, livestock or pets.



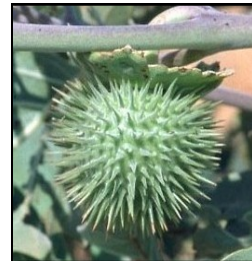
It is a powerful hallucinogen and was used by Native Americans in sacred ceremonies for centuries. Religious leaders (called shamans) were skilled at making a drink from the leaves that induced visions. The leaves, roots, fruits and nectar were also used medicinally for various ailments.

Look For...

Foliage: Broad green leaves with toothed margins, covered with fine hairs. Touching the leaves may cause dermatitis.

Flowers: White, sometimes with tinges of purple, trumpet shaped, up to 8" long and 6" in diameter. The fragrant flowers open late in the day and remain open until late morning the following day. Hawk moths are the primary pollinators and hover like hummingbirds over the flowers at night. The flowers appear from late spring into autumn.

Fruit: Green capsule covered with prickles, about the size of a golf ball. At maturity, it turns brown and splits open, releasing the seeds.



Habit: Rounded, sprawling clumps, up to 4-6 feet in height. Datura thrives in open and disturbed areas such as ditches, sandy washes and roadsides and is considered a weedy species.

