

# THE UK'S MOST POISONOUS PLANTS

BY LINDSEY HARRIS

*A portfolio of six images illustrating the hidden and transient beauty of some of the UK's most poisonous plants, found and photographed growing wild in southern England.*

This photo project has been both mentally and physically challenging, but extremely rewarding. Some of these plants are now extremely rare in the wild; if their habitat changes they will vanish from the landscape almost overnight. On a Berkshire hillside I discovered a lone colony of *Atropa belladonna* (deadly nightshade) that had been deliberately poisoned, and *Hyoscyamus niger* (henbane) now appears to only grow in one (or possibly two) places in my native Dorset. Despite historical reports of *Aconitum napellus* (monkshood) growing wild in Dorset, I didn't find a single specimen.

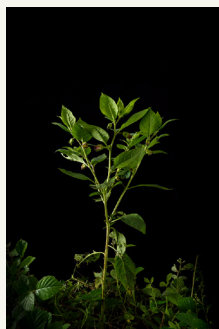
Identifying possible locations for these beautiful plants comprised many hours of desk-based research, plus speculative trekking through ancient woods, streams, fields, hillsides, sand dunes and scrubland. I made repeated trips to find and photograph some plants, carrying cumbersome amounts of photographic equipment each time. Several specimens were, quite literally, growing 'in the middle of nowhere' and it's hard to describe the elation I felt when I spotted a rare plant for the first time.

Four years in the making, with over 2000 miles of travelling/walking across six counties, I am now presenting the first photographs from this ongoing project.

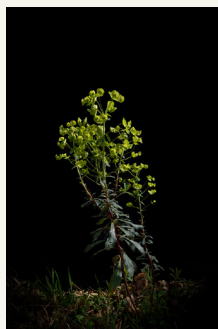
*Photographic locations: Berkshire, Cornwall, Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire.*



*Aconitum  
napellus*  
(monkshood)



*Atropa  
belladonna*  
(deadly nightshade)



*Euphorbia  
amygdaloides*  
(wood spurge)



*Conium  
maculatum*  
(hemlock)



*Hyoscyamus  
niger*  
(henbane)



*Digitalis  
purpurea*  
(common foxglove)

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