

Ask anyone to name the deadliest poison plants and nearly everyone will reel off three or four with no trouble. What's not so easy is to say how many people die each year because of poison plants. If it's the plants themselves then very few deaths result, but if it's the substances made from the plants, then the death toll is in the millions. John Robertson has spent years looking into the facts, fiction and folklore of poison plants and, during his time as warden of the famous Alnwick Garden Poison Garden, he estimates that around 100,000 people have heard him tell some of the stories of the plants, and nearly all of them wanted to learn more. In *Is That Cat Dead?* Robertson now draws on this experience to put a whole new spin on the subject of poison plants. Each chapter takes one of the most frequently asked questions from visitors to the Garden and looks at the plants, folklore and science that lead to an answer to that question... Why are plants poisonous? What's the biggest killer? Have they ever been used as murder weapons? Which poisons are undetectable? Does mandrake really scream? And much, much more... Running the gamut from stinging nettles to strychnine; from catnip to cannabis, Robertson puts a surprising variety of plants through their paces, investigating, interrogating and illuminating his subjects with a natural curiosity, humour and extensive knowledge.

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