

Fetterbush *Leucothoe racemosa*



Shrub similar to *L. axillaris* but with deciduous leaves, 3 to 9 cm long and 1 to 4 cm wide. The racemes of flowers are terminal and bear flowers on only one side. Seeds wingless, 0.8 to 1.2 mm long. Distribution similar to *L. axillaris* but perhaps extending farther north.

Fetterbush *Leucothoe axillaris*

Shrub up to 1.5 m tall with green, slightly arching branches. Leaves alternate, simple, evergreen, lanceolate to elliptic, 5 to 13 cm long, 1.5 to 5 cm wide. Racemes 2 to 7 cm long, bearing white flowers on all sides of the rachis; flowers 2 to 6 mm long. Fruit a capsule 3 to 3.5 mm long, 5 to 6 mm broad. Seed shiny, light brown, 1 to 1.4 mm long. Found from Virginia to Florida to Mississippi in Coastal Plain and sometimes in adjacent Piedmont; mostly along streams and in bogs, swamp forests, and moist woods.

Fetterbush *Leucothoe recurva*

Shrub similar to *L. axillaris* but with deciduous leaves and growing to 4 m tall. Differs from *L. racemosa* in that the anthers are four-awned while they are two-awned for *L. racemosa*. The capsule of *L. racemosa* is rounded on the sutures, and the seeds are wingless and 0.3 to 1.2 mm long; the capsule is angular and seeds winged and 2 to 2.5 mm long for *L. recurva*. *Leucothoe recurva* is found primarily in rocky woods at higher elevations in Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Toxicity

The resinoid andromedotoxin and the glucoside arbutin are the toxic principles responsible for symptoms. Sheep, goats, and cattle are susceptible to poisoning if they consume the plant, especially the leaves. There are recorded cases of toxicity in humans and monkeys.

Most clinical cases of toxicity are seen in the winter and early spring months. When other forage is not available, livestock may consume the toxic plants.

Symptoms

Signs of toxicity occur usually within 6 hours after the plants are consumed. Symptoms include incoordination, excessive salivation, vomiting, bloat, weakness, muscular spasms, coma, and death. The animals are often found down, unable to stand, with their heads weaving from side to side.

Treatment

In severe cases, do not drench animals or give medicine by mouth since they may be unable to swallow due to weakness of the throat muscles. Administer mineral oil or saline laxatives by stomach tube. Use intravenous electrolyte solutions.