

## Yellow jessamine *Gelsemium sempervirens*



Climbing or trailing, somewhat woody perennial vine. Leaves opposite, evergreen, lanceolate, 3 to 7 cm long, 1 to 2.5 cm wide, tips acute to acuminate, margins entire. Flowers showy, yellow, fragrant, to 3 cm long, one to three in axils of leaves, blooming in early spring. Fruit a many-seeded, compressed capsule. Found from bluffs to swamps throughout the South;

most abundant along fence rows and in open woods. Often confused in the vegetative stage with *Lonicera japonica*, which has broader, deciduous leaves.

### Toxicity

The toxic principles are the alkaloids gelsemine, gelseminine, and gelsemoidine. These toxins are related to strychnine.

Livestock are affected, usually in the winter and spring months, from eating any part of the plant. Humans have been poisoned from sucking nectar from the flowers or from eating honey made from the flowers. Bees have died from consuming the nectar.

### Symptoms

Animals are usually found staggering and incoordinated, with dilated eyes and convulsive movements. Often the animals are found down in comatose condition. Death usually occurs soon after animals become comatose.

### Treatment

There is no specific treatment.

Provide supportive therapy with intravenous fluids. Give cardiac and respiratory stimulants such as caffeine and sodium benzoate.