What’s on the cover?

The leaves of the passionflower contain cyanide. The poison is only released when an insect is chewing on the plant. Longwing caterpillars have evolved the ability to feed on this toxic plant.

Long ago, would-be witches made “flying ointments” whose ingredients, like opium poppies, could cause trances, sleep, and stimulating dreams.

The days of mad hatter’s disease are over. So how do people still get mercury poisoning? Mercury from natural sources and from pollution ends up in oceans — and in our seafood.

Toxins in black mamba venom that block pain signals in the nervous system may lead to new pain medications.

CREDITS
The Power of Poison is organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York (amnh.org)

Photo Credits
Cover: passionflower, © Shutterstock; The Witches’ Sabbath Engraving, © Bibliotheque des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, France/Archives Charmet/The Bridgeman Art Library; black mamba, © H. Schmidbauer/Blickwinkel/AGE Fotostock; mercury droplets, © Shutterstock.

Interior: golden poison frog, © AMNH; yellow fat-tailed scorpion, © Shutterstock; zebra longwing butterfly caterpillar, © SuperStock/AGE Fotostock; Napoleon, © DEA Picture Library/AGE Fotostock; chocolate bar, © iStockphoto; cone snail, © AMNH/Chowell.

© 2013 American Museum of Natural History. All rights reserved.

EXPLORE MORE ONLINE
The Power of Poison indianamuseum.org/poison
Explore exhibition highlights, including poison’s paradoxical roles in nature, human health and history, literature, and myth.

Ology amnh.org/explore/ology
The Museum’s website for kids ages seven and up, including a poison quiz and video interviews with scientists about toxins.

Science Bulletins amnh.org/explore/science-bulletins
Watch the documentaries “Caving for Cures” and “Fish Biodiversity Protects Coral Reefs.”

In the Home: Poison Proof Your Home www.aapcc.org/prevention/home/
Clear instructions from the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

Indiana Poison Control Center indianaipoison.org/
Basic information, safety tips, and resources for parents, teachers, and children.

ASPCA: Animal Poison Control aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control
Tips on keeping your pet safe — and how to deal with an emergency.

Look for LIVE poison frogs, a tarantula, and more!

THE POWER OF POISON
indianamuseum.org/poison

VISITOR’S GUIDE

What’s on the cover?

The leaves of the passionflower contain cyanide. The poison is only released when an insect is chewing on the plant. Longwing caterpillars have evolved the ability to feed on this toxic plant.

Long ago, would-be witches made “flying ointments” whose ingredients, like opium poppies, could cause trances, sleep, and stimulating dreams.

The days of mad hatter’s disease are over. So how do people still get mercury poisoning? Mercury from natural sources and from pollution ends up in oceans — and in our seafood.

Toxins in black mamba venom that block pain signals in the nervous system may lead to new pain medications.

Cover: passionflower, © Shutterstock; The Witches’ Sabbath Engraving, © Bibliothèque des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, France/Archives Charmet/The Bridgeman Art Library; black mamba, © H. Schmidbauer/Blickwinkel/AGE Fotostock; mercury droplets, © Shutterstock; butterfly caterpillar, © SuperStock/AGE Fotostock; Napoleon, © DEA Picture Library/AGE Fotostock; chocolate bar, © iStockphoto; cone snail, © AMNH/Chowell.
Poison in Nature
Many of the plants and animals that live in the Chocó forest use poisons to survive.

Match each organism with its adaptation:

- **golden poison frog**
  - Unlike its larger, big-clawed emperor cousin, this arachnid mainly uses its stinger — and deadlier venom — for defense.

- **fat-tailed scorpion**
  - This critter’s bright color and sharp spines warn predators away.

- **zebra longwing caterpillar**
  - This creature gets its intense toxicity from something in its diet, probably beetles.

Did you know?
The word “pharmaceutical” comes from ancient Greek words that mean poisoner, sorcerer, or one who gives medicines.

Poison in Myth & Legend

**TALK ABOUT IT!**

Which of these stories contains a kernel of truth?

- a. Which of these stories contains a kernel of truth?
- b. Where could the poison have come from?
- c. Why are stories about poison so compelling?
- d. Which story do you want to read?

Poison by Accident

It’s your turn to be a forensic detective. Figure out what poisoned a family pet, a famous British captain, and a barred owl.

Could chocolate have made the dog sick?

Poison for Good

Poisons can harm, but some can be powerful medicines.

Test your knowledge with this quiz.

1. A drug made from this animal’s venom treats Type II diabetes:
   a. pit viper
   b. gila monster
   c. emperor scorpion

2. A handful of yew tree needles can kill, but a chemical found in its bark is an effective:
   a. anti-cancer medicine
   b. blood thinner
   c. burn ointment

3. A drug made from cone snail venom:
   a. is a powerful pain killer and suffocation
   b. reduces appetite
   c. is antibacterial

4. *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria can:
   a. cause muscle paralysis and suffocation
   b. stop wrinkles and muscle spasms
   c. both of the above

Poison in Myth & Legend

The mid-1800s saw the birth of modern forensics. In this **live presentation**, explore how poisonings work.

Poison in Nature

Many of the plants and animals that live in the Chocó forest use poisons to survive.

Test your knowledge with this quiz.

1. Match each organism with its adaptation:
   - golden poison frog
   - fat-tailed scorpion
   - zebra longwing caterpillar

Did you know?
The word “pharmaceutical” comes from ancient Greek words that mean poisoner, sorcerer, or one who gives medicines.

Test your knowledge with this quiz.

1. A drug made from this animal’s venom treats Type II diabetes:
   a. pit viper
   b. gila monster
   c. emperor scorpion

2. A handful of yew tree needles can kill, but a chemical found in its bark is an effective:
   a. anti-cancer medicine
   b. blood thinner
   c. burn ointment

3. A drug made from cone snail venom:
   a. is a powerful pain killer and suffocation
   b. reduces appetite
   c. is antibacterial

4. *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria can:
   a. cause muscle paralysis and suffocation
   b. stop wrinkles and muscle spasms
   c. both of the above

Poison in Myth & Legend

The mid-1800s saw the birth of modern forensics. In this **live presentation**, explore how poisonings work.

Poison in Nature

Many of the plants and animals that live in the Chocó forest use poisons to survive.

Test your knowledge with this quiz.

1. Match each organism with its adaptation:
   - golden poison frog
   - fat-tailed scorpion
   - zebra longwing caterpillar

Did you know?
The word “pharmaceutical” comes from ancient Greek words that mean poisoner, sorcerer, or one who gives medicines.
What’s on the cover?

The leaves of the passionflower contain cyanide. The poison is only released when an insect is chewing on the plant. Longwing caterpillars have evolved the ability to feed on this toxic plant.

Long ago, would-be witches made “flying ointments” whose ingredients, like opium poppies, could cause trances, sleep, and stimulating dreams.

The days of mad hatter’s disease are over. So how do people still get mercury poisoning? Mercury from natural sources and from pollution ends up in oceans — and in our seafood.

Toxins in black mamba venom that block pain signals in the nervous system may lead to new pain medications.

CREDITS
The Power of Poison is organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York (amnh.org)

Photo Credits
Cover: passionflower, © Shutterstock; The Witches’ Sabbath Engraving, © Bibliotheque des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, France; Archives Charmet/The Bridgeman Art Library; black mamba, © H. Schmidbauer/Blickwinkel/AGE Fotostock; mercury droplets, © Shutterstock.

Interior: golden poison frog, © AMNH; yellow fat-tailed scorpion, © Shutterstock; zebra longwing butterfly caterpillar, © SuperStock/AGE Fotostock; Napoleon, © DEA Picture Library/AGE Fotostock; chocolate bar, © iStockphoto; cone snail, © SuperStock/AGE Fotostock.

copyright © 2013 American Museum of Natural History. All rights reserved.

EXPLORE MORE ONLINE

**The Power of Poison**
indianamuseum.org/poison

Explore exhibition highlights, including poison’s paradoxical roles in nature, human health and history, literature, and myth.

**Ology**
amnh.org/explore/ology

The Museum’s website for kids ages seven and up, including a poison quiz and video interviews with scientists about toxins.

**Science Bulletins**
amnh.org/explore/science-bulletins

Watch the documentaries “Caving for Cures” and “Fish Biodiversity Protects Coral Reefs.”

**In the Home: Poison Proof Your Home**
www.aapcc.org/prevention/home/

Clear instructions from the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

**Indiana Poison Control Center**
indianapoison.org/

Basic information, safety tips, and resources for parents, teachers, and children.

**ASPCA: Animal Poison Control**
asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control

Tips on keeping your pet safe — and how to deal with an emergency.

**Look for LIVE poison frogs, a tarantula, and more!**