



The Yew Tree Deadly to Beasts



"Make not thy rosary of yew berries," says Keats, and the advice to avoid contact with the fruit of that funereal shrub is undoubtedly sound, says a London journal. A description which has been going on in the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* on the subject of the curious attraction which yew berries seem to have for various animals has elicited a number of instances, chiefly from farmers in Wiltshire, where, as is well known, the yew abounds.

A carter employed by Mr Wyndham of Dinton, after a day's work, stopped his two valuable young cart horses for a minute or two near a yew tree while he hitched of the harrows. The horses at once began unperceived to feed on the yew berries and scarcely had they reached the stables, a mile and a half distant, before each "reared on end" and fell down dead.

A similar fate befell the two leaders of a four-horse van engaged in removing furniture from the rectory at West Knoyle. Mrs Charlotte Starkey of Bromham also tells how some of the finest and oldest deer in Compton Park were killed by eating yew berries on an islet which they were enabled to reach owing to the lake being frozen and numerous other correspondents cite like examples. Animals are credited with an instinctive repugnance to poisonous growths, whence Milton's quaint reference to the unwholesome plant "whereof the ewe not bites"; but this antipathy certainly does not appear to apply to the fascinating berries of the yew.

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