

## Most Delicious Poisons: the story of nature's toxins from spices to vices

*Author: Noah Whiteman, Little, Brown Spark, 2023*

*ISBN: 9780316386579*

The author, Noah Whiteman is an evolutionary biologist at the University of California, Berkley. He is Professor of Integrative Biology and Molecular and Cellular Biology, with links to entomology and computational biology at other tertiary institutions. In the book he explores the evolution of poisons and toxins in plants from potential biological defence mechanisms to the use by humans as spices, flavourings, recreational and commercial use and as poisons. The author draws on indigenous knowledge (both historical and current) on the use of plant poisons and toxins to modern day applications in both culinary, medical use and abuse. The book is well structured taking the reader through thirteen chapters based primarily on the chemical nature of the poisons and toxins. This approach lends itself for the author to cover poisons and toxins from many plant species based on their effects. Integrated into this, is the knowledge of their effects on humans and, where known, the pathways and receptors which interacts with the respective poisons and toxins. The author cleverly takes the reader through his own personal journey since childhood learning about plants from his father to developing international recognition as an expert on plant poisons and toxins. The book is well written and structured, and the writing style is easy to read and provides information for both the 'interested' and the 'expert'.

*Reviewed by Michael Legge, PhD*

