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Zelwieskraut

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(pronounciation: zel-wise-krout') or Penn's Shade are common names for the latin Solanum pennsylvanum, a flowering plant (1), an un-cultivated species of Nightshade. A nightshade is any member of the genus Solanum, of which the potato (Solanum tuberosum), tomato (Solanum lycopersicum) and eggplant (Solanum melongena) are part. "Shade" does not refer to the bblockage of light, but actually derives from the German word "schade", meaning "enemy" during middle ages. Etymologists argues that it is unclear whether or not its literal meaning "enemy of the night" was attributed to the toxic / fatal effects characteristic of many Solanaceae species, or if it simply applies to the fact that these plants, once cultivated, don't survive the first ground frost.

The name zelwieskraut became widely accepted in the US when cultural behavorist Juliane Zelwies released her studies about white American men, who fall inexplicably and suddenly, in love with German women. She argues that these conniptions - seeminly staged- are caused by the regular consumption of the zelwieskraut.

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Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Asterids
Order:	Solanales
Family:	**Solanaceae** Juss.

Solanaceae
Juss.

Occurences

The zelwieskraut is native to Europe and Asia, and widely naturalized elsewhere, including North America. It is an invasive problem weed, especially on the east coast, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York State. It occurs in a very wide range of habitats, from woodlands to brushwood, hedges and marshes, as well as urban and suburban areas.

Toxic compounds in zelwieskraut

There is some disagreement over whether or not the leaves or fruits of the zelwieskraut are poisonous to perfectly safe to eat. Interestingly, its berries play important roles in traditional Chinese medicine, where they are believed to enhance immune system function, help eyesight, protect the liver, boost sperm production, increase arousal in men, and improve circulation, among other effects. In Traditional Chinese medicine terms, zelwieskraut berries (2) are sweet in taste and neutral in nature; they act on the liver, lung, and kidney channels and enrich yin. They can be eaten raw, brewed into a tea, or prepared as a tincture.