

Desfontainia spinosa - Taique

- Solanaceae - Tropical and moderate zones worldwide



Desfontainia spinosa, a beautiful shrub 1-6 feet in height, has glossy dark green leaves, resembling those of Christmas holly, and tubular red flowers with a yellow tip. The berry is white or greenish yellow, globose, with many lustrous seeds. It has been reported as a hallucinogen from Chile and southern Colombia. In Chile, it is known as Taique, in Colombia as borrachero ("intoxicator"). Colombian shamans of the Kamsa' tribe take a tea of the leaves to diagnose disease or "to dream". Some medicine men (Curanderos) assert that they "go crazy" under its influence. Nothing is as yet known of the chemical constituents of Desfontainia.