



# FLORIDA FUSION CENTER

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Request for Information

## Kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa korth*)

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is providing the following situational awareness brief addressing the growing popularity of a plant substance commonly called Kratom, which is being promoted as a legal psychoactive product on numerous websites within and outside the United States (U.S.).

The *mitragyna speciosa korth* tree, or Kratom, is a member of the coffee-bean tree family that grows in tropical Southeast Asia, particularly in Thailand. The tree can reach heights up to 50 feet with a spread of over 15 feet. Normal ingestion methods include drinking the dried crushed leaves as a tea or in capsules, or chewing the raw leaves. For centuries, Kratom has been used as both a stimulant and a sedative/pain reliever, particularly by the natives of Thailand.



### Chemistry and Pharmacology

There are over 40 compounds in Kratom leaves, including mitragynine, mitraphylline and 7-hydroxymitragynine which is believed to be the primary active alkaloid in the plant. Pharmacology studies as early as 1836 revealed a number of beneficial applications of Kratom including; a cure for fever, wound treatment, pain reliever and suppressor of opiate withdrawal symptoms. Rarely seen negative side effects, especially at high doses, include nausea and vomiting, hallucinations, delusions, listlessness, tremors and aggression. There have been no reported incidents of Kratom being a primary cause of death.

### Effects

The effects of Kratom are described as being a combination of both a stimulant (in low doses) and a sedative/pain reliever (in high doses). At the stimulant level, the subject is more alert, physical energy is increased and the subject becomes more talkative and possibly agitated. At higher levels of dosage Kratom acts as a pain reliever and sedative, producing feelings of euphoria and sleepiness. Prolonged Kratom consumption may lead to addiction and may also produce anorexia, weight loss, insomnia, depression, skin darkening, dry mouth and constipation. Documented withdrawal symptoms include; achy muscles and bones, runny nose, jerky movements of the limbs, hostility, aggression and wild swings of emotions.

## Legal

Kratom is not currently scheduled as a controlled substance in the U.S., meaning that all parts of the plant and its extracts are legal to cultivate, buy, possess, and distribute (sell, trade or give) without a license or prescription. If sold as a dietary supplement, sales must conform to U.S. supplement laws. If sold for consumption as a food or drug, sales are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In February of this year, the FDA moved to seize shipments of Kratom arriving in the U.S. because the agency determined the substance was a botanical that qualified as a new dietary ingredient that had not been approved as such.

In 1943, the Thai government enacted laws making it illegal to plant a Kratom tree and called for all existing trees to be cut down. However; in late 2013, steps were taken to remove Kratom from the Thai narcotic drug list, though still regulating it in other ways due to its effects on the nervous system.

A number of European countries have passed laws regarding Kratom. These laws range from complete prohibition to total acceptance with no controls, or limited regulations for use by a physician's prescription or for use only by those over the age of 18.

In the U.S., a number of states have taken measures to control or ban the substance and its derivatives. In 2012, Indiana became the first state to indirectly ban Kratom by scheduling the two active ingredients in Kratom, mitragynine and 7-hydroxy-mitragynine. Iowa proposed to categorize Kratom as a cannabimimetic agent (similar to marijuana) classifying the drug as a controlled substance.

Arizona and Louisiana have applied an age limit of 18 to legally purchase, possess and consume Kratom. Illinois has approved it for possession and consumption without regulation. Many other states have recently enacted or proposed legislation with various outcomes. In Florida, only the county of Sarasota has banned Kratom in all forms.



*Kratom is also known as Thang, Kakuam, Thom, Ketum and Biak, but should not be confused with K2 or Spice products that may bear the name Kratom on its packaging. K2 and/or Spice are usually plant based products that have been treated with toxic chemicals, most of which are illegal, and normally smoked.*

*The Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Regional Crime Laboratories have confirmed 7 submissions of Kratom since 2011, from local law enforcement agencies. Kratom is also on the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA's) list of Drugs and Chemicals of Concern.*

If you would like more information about this intelligence brief or if you have information that you would like posted in a bulletin, please contact the Florida Department of Law Enforcement at (850) 410-7645.

**Send feedback comments or suggestions to: [Fusionfeedback@fdle.state.fl.us](mailto:Fusionfeedback@fdle.state.fl.us) (Please reference the Brief #14-123).**

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