

Alstonia constricta

Common name:

Bitter bark, Quinine tree, Peruvian bark,

Palatability to Livestock:

Moderate.

Toxicity to Goats:

Low risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Cattle and sheep.

Poisonous Principle:

. Alkaloids, alstonine, alstonidine, and reserpine.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Excitability, nervous reactions,
- . Stiffness of limbs, staggers,
- . Reddening of mucous membranes around the eyes.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Most cases of toxicity occur when grass fodder is dry and scarce.

Treatment;

- . Be aware of potential stock problems.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Chopping the trees induces suckering.
- . Try cut stump treatment, with Tordon® or Picloran®.
- . Use caution in allowing stock access to these trees in dry seasons.

Comments:

- . A tree up to 12 metres high, often suckering at the base forming thickets.
- . Outer bark is corky and yellow-grey, and the inner bark is yellow, exuding a milky sap, bitter to taste.

. Leaves are opposite, bright green, flaccid, and with a slender stalk, which exudes a milky sap if broken.

. Flowers are star-shaped, creamy, in open bunches at the ends of branches.

. Fruits are long pods, with many narrow, tufted seeds.

. Found in central and southern Queensland, north-west slopes, and north-west plains of NSW.

. Stock appear to be able to eat this plant most of the time, without ill-effects.

. Seasons when feed is dry and scarce, seem to be when animals are affected.

. There is no quinine in this plant.



Picture: *Alstonia spp*

Further Reading;

- . Cribb and Cribb. Wild Medicine in Australia. 1990.
- . Cunningham, Mulham, Milthorpe and Leigh. Plants of Western NSW. 1999.
- . Everist . Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981