

## *Alternanthera pungens*

### **Common name:**

Khaki weed

### **Palatability to Livestock:**

Low, when young.

### **Toxicity to Goats:**

No.

### **Toxicity to Other Species:**

May cause skin problems in cattle.

### **Poisonous Principle:**

Unknown.

### **Effects:**

*Signs and symptoms;*

- . Skin problems in cattle.
- . Can cause dermatitis, hay fever and asthma in humans.

*Health and Production Problems;*

- . Mechanical damage to feet and mouths of stock, and dogs.

*Treatment;*

Be aware of livestock problems.

### **Integrated Control Strategy:**

- . Declared weed in Victoria, South Australia, and parts of NSW.
- . Deep cultivation to 15 cms or more to bury the seed.
- . Spot spray with herbicide on actively growing plants. Try hormone type, eg metsulfuron or glyphosates herbicides.
- . Hand pull small plants when soil is moist, making sure the taproot is removed.
- . Fertilise to assist competitive species.

### **Comments:**

- . A low creeping perennial herb with a deep taproot.
- . Reddish, hairy, trailing stems which take root at the nodes, forming thick mats on the ground.

. Leaves are opposite, light green and oval, upper leaves are smooth, lower surfaces are rough.

. Flowers are prickly and burr-like, cream coloured, forming clusters in the leaf axils.

. The flowers and burrs give the khaki colour to the plant.

. Fruit is a small nut, amongst the flowers.

. Reproduces by seed, transported by animals, tyres, and shoes etc.

. Can grow all year round, but usually dies off in winter and grows in the warmer months.

. Widespread in summer rainfall areas in NSW, but mainly in localized clusters.

. A native of tropical America.

. Occurs on stock routes and waste land, and is a nuisance in orchards.

. Will spread in dense mats that prevent other pasture growth.



Picture: *Alternanthera pungens*

### **Further Reading;**

- . Auld and Medd. Weeds. 1992
- . Cunningham, Mulham, Milthorpe and Leigh. Plants of Western NSW. 1999.
- . Huggins and Lucy. Weeds of Southern Queensland. Qld DPI. 1997
- . Lamp and Collett. Weeds in Australia. 1976.
- . Parsons and Cuthbertson. Noxious Weeds in Australia. 2001
- . Swarbrick and Skarratt. Bushweed 2 Database. Qld DPI. 1997