**Atropa belladonna**

**Common name:**
Deadly Nightshade, Dwale,

**Palatability to Livestock:**
Not known to be eaten.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
High risk.

**Toxicity to Other Species:**
Toxic to all livestock spp as well as humans, but appears to be rarely eaten.

**Poisonous Principle:**
Tropane alkaloids, notably apropine, scopolamine and hyosycamine.

**Effects:**

*Signs and Symptoms:*
- Constipation and infrequent urination; some initial excitation and later depression, muscle trembling and weakness, leading to recumbency.
- Dilated pupils, dry mouth and nose, increased heart rate but a weak pulse.
- Loss of rumen sounds, laboured respiration.
- In humans, nausea, fainting, loss of coordination, respiration and heart difficulties, drop in temperature and blindness.

*Health and Production Problems:*
- Some cases may progress further to either coma or terminal convulsions, within 24 hours.
- May block the effects of acetylcholine on smooth muscle tissue.
- Many cases recover.

*Treatment:*
- See Vet. Try activated charcoal.

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
- Garden plant.
- Use herbicide as a spot spray, or hand pull into disposable bags.
- Do not feed to any livestock.

**Comments:**
- *A. belladonna* is cultivated in Australia for medicinal drug manufacture.
- Animal flesh may pass on the toxin.
- An erect, short-lived, perennial, branched herb, with a short invasive rootstock, which bleeds red sap.
- Grows over a metre high.
- Stems are slightly downy and branched at intervals, gives off a foul odour when crushed.
- Alternate leaves are large, dark green, oval and entire on stalks, growing in pairs, one leaf much larger than the other.
- Flowers are grey/yellow outside, and reddish/purple inside, with red veins, bell shaped, with a broad tubular corolla, and five lips.
- Single flowers grow on stalks all summer.
- Berries are purple to black and shiny, as large as a cherry, sweet to taste, and narcotic.
- Usually found in the cooler parts of Australia, where it was used as a novelty garden plant.
- It is a native of Europe, and common on the chalk downs in England.

*Further Reading:*
- Simmonds, Holst and Bourle. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000
- Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997