**Castanospermum australe**

**Common name:**
Black bean, Morton Bay chestnut,

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

**Toxicity to Goats:**
High risk.

**Toxicity to Other Species:**
High risk to sheep, cattle and horses.

**Poisonous Principle:**
Castanospermine, an indolizidine alkaloid.

**Effects:**
*Signs and Symptoms;*
. Gastro-enteritis, causing severe diarrhoea, associated weight loss and depression.

*Health and Production Problems;*
. Affected animals either die or become ill-thrifty.

**Treatment:**
Be aware of potential stock problems.

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
. Usually a Parks and Gardens specimen tree.
. Dispose of clippings carefully, or burn.

**Comments:**
. Grown in coastal Queensland and northern NSW. Found naturally in rainforests and along river banks. Also grown as street or garden trees.
. A large native rainforest tree, with a huge trunk. Evergreen, needs deep rich soils. A native of NE Australia.
. Leaves are alternate, a dark glossy green on the upper surface; there are ten or more leaflets along a stalk, with a swollen base, and smell of cucumber if crushed.
. Flowers are reddish/yellow and pea-shaped, growing on the old wood, and flowering in the spring; five petals, long stamens, in summer.
. The seed pods are dark brown and very hard. When ripe they split showing several very large seeds.
. Poisoning occurs in dry seasons when fodder is scarce. Some cattle seem to prefer the seeds, and ripe seeds seem to be more toxic than unripe seeds.
. Leaves, seeds and bark can be toxic to humans and livestock.
. Ripe seeds that have germinated do not seem to cause toxicity problems. Seeds must be cooked before eating to destroy the toxins.
. After more research, this plant may be useful for treating cancer.
. The timber is hard, dark brown and ideal for cabinet-making, a valuable product, however the sawdust can cause nasal bleeding and dermatitis.
. Poisoning usually occurs during drought, in winter, when seeds are on the ground.

- Picture: Castanospermum australe

**Further Reading:**
. Dowling and McKenzie, Poisonous Plants . 1993
. Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997
. McKenzie. Veterinary Clinical Toxicology. 2000