

Datura ferox

Common name:

Fierce Thornapple, Long-spine Thornapple,

Palatability to Livestock:

Seldom eaten.

Toxicity to Goats:

High.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Toxic to all livestock and humans.

Poisonous Principle:

Tropane alkaloids, hyoscyne, scopolamine.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Excessive thirst,
- . Depressed breathing,
- . Convulsions, paralysis, coma, death,
- . Signs of poisoning vary enormously.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Most cases recover,
- . Inexperienced, hungry stock should be kept away from infested pastures.

Treatment;

- . Removing animals from where the plant is growing, often results in recovery.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . A "Declared weed" in Queensland, NT, Tasmania, Victoria and WA.
- . Herbicides will increase the palatability.

Comments:

- . An upright annual, growing to 150cms tall.
- . The strong stems have a purple tinge.
- . Leaves are large, alternate, dark green and toothed, and have a pungent smell when crushed.
- . White flowers emerge singly in forks of branches on long stalks, long and trumpet shaped and almost as long as the leaves.

- . Late spring to autumn flowering.
- . When mature, the large brown fruits about 4 cms long, with green spines about 15 cms long, split open to release large black seeds.
- . Summer growing, and a problem in wet seasons and in crops.
- . Species difference is in the number of spines per fruit, 100 in the common thornapple, and 40 in the fierce thornapple.
- . Found in fertile soils, stock camps, yards, and roadsides.
- . All parts are toxic, however, seed contamination of feed grains is the most common cause of poisoning.
- . Rarely grazed due to bitter taste and odour.
- . Cattle may graze the leaves occasionally without ill effect.



Picture: *Datura ferox*

Further Reading:

- . Dowling and McKenzie. Poisonous Plants. 1993.
- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981.
- . Henry, Hall, Jordan, Milson, Sclafe and Silcock. Pasture plants of Southern Inland Queensland. 1995.
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004.
- . Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997.