

## *Gomphocarpus physocarpus*

### **Common name:**

Balloon cotton bush, Bladder cotton,

### **Palatability:**

Not palatable.

### **Toxicity to Goats:**

Moderate risk

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

Toxic to cattle, sheep, horses, donkeys and pigs.

### **Poisonous Principle:**

Cardiac glycosides, cardenolide type, similar to digitalis.

### **Effects:**

#### *Signs and symptoms;*

- . Gastro-enteritis,
- . Heart irregularities,
- . Depression, eventually heart block.

#### *Health and Production Problems;*

- . Rapid death in some cases, but little effect in other cases.

#### *Treatment;*

- . Be aware of potential stock problems.

### **Integrated Control Strategy:**

- . Hand pull before flowering, and remove as much of the root as possible to prevent suckering.
- . Wick wipe with herbicide, Group I.
- . May be declared “Noxious” in some areas.

### **Comments:**

- . Shrub up to 2m high, with hairy stems, exudes white milky latex if damaged.
- . Leaves, long, soft, smooth, tapering to a fine point.
- . Prefers well drained soil in a sunny spot.

- . Bell shaped flowers with four petals are white to yellow, in racemes on long stalks, for most of the year.
- . Toxins are present in young seedlings.
- . Fruits are globular with a sunken tip, on a straight stalk, and covered with soft spines.
- . These are greenish white, bladdery and pendulous; fruits have three sharp angles forming three compartments, each has a single black seed.
- . Native of South Africa.
- . Found in north-eastern NSW, and Queensland.



Picture: *Gomphocarpus physocarpus* wikipedia

### **Further Reading:**

- . Huggins and Lucy. Weeds of Southern Qld. 1997.
- . Dowling and McKenzie. Poisonous Plants. 1997.
- . Auld and Medd. Weeds. 1979.
- . Parsons and Cuthbertson. Noxious Weeds of Australia. 2001.
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004.
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000.
- . Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997.
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004.