

Jatropha curcas/multifida

Common name:

Physic nut, Purge nut, Coral plant,

Palatability to Livestock:

Not known to be eaten.

Toxicity to Goats:

Potentially toxic.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Potentially toxic to all animal species.

Poisonous Principle:

- . Purgative oil,
- . Curcin, phytotoxic.
- . Glycocides,
- . Resin, producing dermatitis.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Acute gastro-enteritis.
- . Depression, collapse, in humans
- . Dermatitis and eye irritant to humans.

Health and Production Problems;

Usually, a rapid recovery.

Treatment;

See Vet or Doctor.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Declared “Noxious” in NT and WA
- . Do not feed these clippings to any livestock.
- . Dig out and burn, cultivate and use herbicides.

Comments:

- . Garden plant naturalised in parts of Australia.
- . A small tree or large shrub, with milky sap and thin bark.
- . Leaves are heart-shaped, thin and green, with several veins, on long leaf stalks.

. Flowers are small, inconspicuous, reddish and look like coral.

. Fruits are oval, yellow- green and fleshy, becoming dark brown, reportedly sweet, with several black seeds.

. Native to tropical America, growing in warmer parts of Australia.

. Seeds and oil are very toxic, tasting of peanuts, a skin and eye irritant to humans.

. Traditionally used for hedging, candle and soap making.

. May have an anti-tumor activity.

. Symptoms in humans, include vomiting, diarrhoea, cramps, numbness and paralysis in arms and legs, similar to those caused by atropine – diminished sweating, dry skin and mouth, slight dilation of pupil, slight increase in heart beat, and flushing of facial skin. Covacevich.



Picture: *Jatropha curcas* agric.wa.gov.au

References:

- . Covacevich, Davie and Pearn. Toxic Plants and Animals. 1987
- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981.
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