

## *Lactuca serriola*

### **Common name:**

Prickly lettuce, Compass plant,

### **Palatability to Livestock:**

High at all stages.

### **Toxicity to Goats:**

Low risk.

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

Potentially toxic to sheep, cattle and horses.

### **Poisonous Principle:**

Unknown.

### **Effects:**

*Signs and symptoms;*

. Acute respiratory distress.

*Health and Production Problems;*

. Affected animals may die.

*Treatment;*

Nil.

### **Integrated Control Strategy:**

- . Be aware of potential stock problems.
- . Chip out, or cultivate.
- . Use herbicides.

### **Comments:**

. A bristly, biennial growing up to a metre high.

. Erect stems have a white, milky, bitter sap, few branches, and are slightly hairy.

. Leaves are long, thin and dull bluish-green, alternate, stiff, and finely toothed, the margins and midrib have spines.

. Depending on the species, leaves may be smooth, hairy, or spiny.

. Small flowers are pale yellow, like dandelions, in loose clusters, flowering is from spring to autumn.

. Seeds have a tuft of white hair,

. A common weed of gardens, roads, and wasteland, as well as degraded pastures.

. A native of Europe, found all over Australia.

. Probably only young plants are toxic, and then only to very hungry animals.

. The plant is particularly attractive to horses.

. Seems to have pain-killing properties.

. Plant is attractive to birds.



Picture: *Lactuca serriola* Wikipedia



### **Further Reading:**

. Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981.

. Lamp and Collett.

Field Guide to Weeds in Australia 1979

. McBarron, Medical and Veterinary Aspects of Plant Poisons in Australia. 1976

. Roth. Weeds. Friend or Foe. 2001