Cytisus scoparius

Common name:
Broom, English/Scotch broom,

Palatability to Livestock:
High at all stages.

Toxicity to Goats:
Not known to be toxic.

Toxicity to Other Species:
Not known to be toxic.
Maybe horses, (Blood)

Poisonous Principle:
. Most species contain toxic alkaloids, cytisine and sparteine in varying amounts, and scoparin, - in the flowers and seeds.

Effects:
Signs and Symptoms;
. If consumed in sufficient quantities, it can cause excitement, incoordination, convulsions, sleepiness, coma and death due to asphyxia.

Health and Production Problems;
Be aware of potential stock problems.

Treatment;
Nil.

Integrated Control Strategy:
. Goats will ringbark and destroy broom shrubs.
. Slash, cultivate and use herbicides.
. Biological controls are being tested.
. Grub out, or pull plants.

Comments:
. A very invasive garden plant that has invaded bushland, becoming a bad fire hazard.
. An erect woody perennial growing up to 3 metres high, with brownish/green ridged stems, sometimes deciduous, shrub,
. Seeds have a long dormancy, so mechanical control is virtually impossible.
. Although goats will eradicate broom, they are unsuitable in conservation areas.
. Once established, broom will fix nitrogen in the soil, and dominate pasture.
. Broom is extensively grazed by rabbits, and is a natural harbour for other pest animals as well as rabbits.
. May loose leaves in winter or dry conditions – and live for over 25 years.
. Seeds may live for several decades in the soil.
. Seeds are poisonous if eaten in quantity, and foliage may cause digestive problems in horses, C multiflorus, White Spanish broom, is a large shrub, 3m, white flowers, Sep-Dec, Poisonous, can hybridise with C scoparius, causing a serious weed potential.

Picture: Cytisus scoparius  AGDEX cover 1999

Further Reading:
.Swarbrick and Skarratt. Bushweed 2 Database 1997
.Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997

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