

Datura stramonium

Common name:

Thornapple, False Castor Oil, Jimson Weed,

Palatability to Livestock:

Not known to be eaten.

Toxicity to Goats:

High risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

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

Poisonous Principle:

The tropane alkaloids, hyoscyamine, scopolamine and atropine.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Constipation and infrequent urination.
- . Excitation, later depression, hallucinations.
- . Muscle trembling, weakness leading to an unsteady gait, and eventual recumbency.
- . Dilated pupils, dry mouth and nose.
- . Increased heart rate, but weak pulse.
- . Loss of rumen sounds, laboured respiration.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Some cases recover, with no long term effects on their productivity, others die.

Treatment;

- . Be aware of potential stock problems.
- . Activated charcoal.
- . Herbicides can increase palatability.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Cultivate before seeding, to kill seeds.
- . Biological controls are being tested.
- . Wick wipe with herbicide before flowering. (Group I), eg Grazon.®
- . This is a declared “Noxious Weed” in Tas, Vic, Qld , WA. NT.

Comments:

- . Most plants are annuals, so prevent seeding.
- . A very erect weed growing to over a metre.
- . Stems and leaves are bright green, tinged with purple. Leaves are large, lobed and alternate, dark above, pale below, pungent smell when crushed.
- . Flowers are white, sometimes pink or purple, trumpet shaped, flaring at the open end, about ten cms long., singly in forks of branches, summer to autumn.
- . Fruit is an egg-shaped spiny globular capsule, about 5 cms across, with up to 100 spines.
- . In autumn the seed capsule dries off to spread the large black seeds, viable for 20 years.
- . Summer growing, a problem in wet seasons.
- . The plant has a strong bitter taste, and offensive odour, which may deter grazing.
- . Humans may get dermatitis from the leaves, flowers or fruit. All parts are toxic to eat.
- . Widespread throughout all Australia.



Picture: *Datura stramonium* weeds.org.au

Further Reading:

- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981
- . Dowling and McKenzie. Poisonous Plants. 1993
- . Henry, Hall, Jordan, Milson, Sclafe and Silcock. Pasture Plants of Southern Inland Queensland. 1995
- . McBarron. Medical and Veterinary Aspects of Plant Poisons. 1976
- . Parsons and Cuthbertson. NoxiousWeeds of Australia. 2001
- . Roth. Weeds. Friend or Foe 2001
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004