

Aconitum napellus

Common name:

Monkshood, Wolfsbane, Aconite

Palatability to Livestock:

Not known to be eaten.

Toxicity to Goats:

Toxic, high risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Toxic to all livestock, cats, dogs and humans.

Poisonous Principle:

Polycyclic diterpenoid alkaloids, eg. Aconite.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Restlessness, salivation,
- . Bloating, belching, repetitive swallowing,
- . Profound weakness, then collapse,
- . Distorted heart beat, very weak pulse,
- . Shallow respiration.

In humans, cold clammy skin, staggering, vertigo and giddiness.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Slowing of breathing and heart rate,
- . Substantial doses cause instant death.

In humans, small doses cause tingling and numbness in the tongue, throat, lips, and fingertips – sensation of ants crawling over the body.

Treatment;

No specific antidote, See Vet or Doctor.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Do not feed these garden clippings to any animal.
- . Use herbicide, or weed out into disposable bags.

Comments:

- . Garden plant, 22 species known.
- . A group of perennials, with a thick black poisonous root stock.

- . Stems are upright, growing to about a metre high.
- . Leaves are glossy, dark green and divided like parsley.
- . Spikes of hooded flowers, on a long stiff stalk, varying from pink to purple, up to a metre high, similar to larkspur and delphiniums.
- . Pods contain winged seeds.
- . The plant has sedative and pain-killing properties, but there is extreme danger of overdosing.
- . Toxins can be absorbed through cuts in the skin.
- . Roots, leaves, flowers and seeds are all poisonous.
- . Stock losses are usually only encountered when animals are given access to garden plants and clippings.
- . *A. vulparia*, wolfsbane, was a bait poison, and was also an effective arrow poison in Eastern Asia. These flowers are a pale yellow.
- . *A. ferox* contains prussic acid.



Picture: *Aconitum* - flowers

Further Reading:

- . Everist. Poisonous Plants in Australia. 1981
- . Kohnke. Feeding and Nutrition of Horses. 1988
- . McBarron. Medical and Veterinary Aspects of Plant Poisons. 1976.
- . Paterson. Herbs in the Garden. 1985.
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004.
- . Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997