

Amsinkia spp

Common name:

Iron weed, Tarweed, Yellow Burrweed, Fiddleneck,

Palatability to Livestock:

Seldom eaten.

Toxicity to Goats:

Moderate risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Horses, pigs, cattle, and sheep.

Poisonous Principle:

Pyrrolizidine alkaloids.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Chronic weight loss,
- . Sometimes acute jaundice, with or without photosensitization.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Chronic ingestion of this plant may lead to significant liver damage, and loss of subsequent long-term productivity.
- . Chronically damaged livers, in some animals, are inclined to accumulate excessive amounts of copper, which can ultimately be released and kill the animal.

Treatment;

- . Be aware of potential problems. See Vet.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Pre-emergent application of herbicide is the best control method.
- . Wick-wipe or spot-spray with herbicide after germination. (Group B or C)
- . Hand-pull into disposable bags where possible.
- . This species must be controlled in the early stages, as several generations can grow in one season.
- . This is declared noxious in Victoria, WA, and NSW.

Comments:

- . Goats and sheep may tolerate many months of ingestion, but eventually risk being poisoned.
- . If eaten for more than one season, and in large amounts, some animals may lose weight and become ill-thrifty, others may suddenly become jaundiced and die.
- . An erect, winter growing, branched, annual forb, covered with stiff hairs, up to a metre high, sometimes growing from a rosette.
- . Leaves are dark green to grey green.
- . Small trumpet-shaped, yellow flowers are densely packed along one side of the stem, which is curved like a young fern frond, giving a "fiddle neck" appearance.
- . As the flowers mature, the frond straightens.
- . The plant dies off in summer, and germinates from seed after autumn rain.
- . Several generations can grow in one season.
- . There are three spp and several hybrids.
- . Found in cereal crops and roadsides, and is spread by machinery and animal coats, causing a veg fault in fleece.
- . Spread over the western slopes of NSW, and southern Queensland.
- . Native to North America.



Picture: Weed Control in Lucerne pastures. 1992.

Further Reading;

- . AGFACTS. NSW Dept Ag. 1997
- . Auld and Medd. Weeds. 1992
- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981
- . Parsons and Cuthbertson. Noxious Weeds of Australia. 2001
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000
- . Swarbrick and Skarratt. Bushweed 2 Database. 1997