

Calotropis procera

Common name:

Rubber bush, Kings crown,
Rubber tree, Calotrope.

Palatability to Livestock:

. It is not palatable to livestock as a rule.
. Cattle and goats graze this plant during the dry season with no observed ill effects. It is probable that the bio-types found in Australia are not toxic.

Toxicity to Goats:

Toxic, moderate risk,

Toxicity to Other Species:

May be toxic to all grazing animals, horses, sheep, cattle and donkeys.

Poisonous Principle:

Cardiac glycosides, notably convallotoxin.

Effects:

Signs and Symptoms;

. Depression,
. Diarrhea,
. Slow irregular heart rate, and eventually heart block.

Health and Production Problems;

. Rapid death in some cases, but little effect in others until mustered, when they may drop dead unexpectedly.
. Nausea, vomiting, blistering and irritation of tender parts of the body, probably from the latex.

Treatment;

Be aware of possible stock problems.

Integrated Control Strategy:

. Hand-pull seedlings, spray with herbicide and wetter, or grub out. Try glyphosate.
. Basal bark or cut stump treatment with herbicide. Try Tordon®.

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. Try goats – with caution.
. This plant is declared a “Noxious Weed” in Queensland.

Comments:

. A spreading medium sized shrub 2-4 metres high, with a waxy appearance.
. Milky sap runs when cut or broken.
. Reproduces by seed or suckers.
. Stems are smooth, and leaves are in opposite pairs, without stalks, grey green and thick.
. Flowers are waxy, white, and in groups, with a purplish centre.
. Ruminants, such as the goat, are much more tolerant of this type of plant poison than are horses and donkeys.
. Problems may arise if the plant is fed in a mixture of garden clippings, or if it is present as a contaminant in hay.
. This plant is the larval food of the “Wanderer” butterfly.
. It is native to tropical Asia and Africa.



Picture: *Calotropis procera*

Further Reading:

. 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.