

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, cytosine 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,

- . Leaves consist of three leaflets, dark green, hairy lower leaves, compound upper leaves.
- . Flowers are bright yellow and pea shaped in spring and summer.
- . 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 lose 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:

- . Auld and Medd. Weeds. 1992
- . Blood. Environmental Weeds. Field Guide for SE Australia CRC Weed Management Systems 2003
- . Everist . Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981
- . Parsons and Cuthbertson. Noxious Weeds of Australia. 2001
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004.
- . Swarbrick and Skarratt. Bushweed 2 Database 1997
- . Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997