

Lactuca serriola

Common name:

Prickly lettuce, Compass plant,

Palatability to Livestock:

High at all stages.

Toxicity to Goats:

Low risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Potentially toxic to sheep, cattle and horses.

Poisonous Principle:

Unknown.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

. Acute respiratory distress.

Health and Production Problems;

. Affected animals may die.

Treatment;

Nil.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Be aware of potential stock problems.
- . Chip out, or cultivate.
- . Use herbicides.

Comments:

- . A bristly, biennial growing up to a metre high.
- . Erect stems have a white, milky, bitter sap, few branches, and are slightly hairy.
- . Leaves are long, thin and dull bluish-green, alternate, stiff, and finely toothed, the margins and midrib have spines.
- . Depending on the species, leaves may be smooth, hairy, or spiny.
- . Small flowers are pale yellow, like dandelions, in loose clusters, flowering is from spring to autumn.
- . Seeds have a tuft of white hair,

- . A common weed of gardens, roads, and wasteland, as well as degraded pastures.
- . A native of Europe, found all over Australia.
- . Probably only young plants are toxic, and then only to very hungry animals.
- . The plant is particularly attractive to horses.
- . Seems to have pain-killing properties.
- . Plant is attractive to birds.



Picture: *Lactuca serriola* Wikipedia



Further Reading:

- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981.
- . Lamp and Collett. Field Guide to Weeds in Australia 1979
- . McBarron, Medical and Veterinary Aspects of Plant Poisons in Australia. 1976
- . Roth. Weeds. Friend or Foe. 2001