

Morinda reticulata

Common name:

Mapoon,

Palatability to Livestock:

Only to horses.

Toxicity to Goats:

Unknown.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Sheep, cattle and horses.

Poisonous Principle:

Selenium.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Horses, lameness and loss of hair from mane and tail.
- . Sheep, fleece shedding and sudden death.
- . Cattle, weight loss.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Horses may eventually die from eating this plant.
- . Sheep can also die.

Treatment;

None.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Not practical.

Comments:

- . Field cases occur during spring and summer after a burn, when new shoots appear.
- . Found on the Cape York peninsula as far south as Cooktown, mainly in eucalypt woodland.
- . A shrub with a thick woody rootstock and several erect pale green stems.
- . Leaves are in opposite pairs, pale green, thick and leathery.

- . Flowers are in groups of 6 – 12 crowded into rounded heads; each head with large white leaf-like bracts at the base.
- . Plants have a high selenium content, and grow in areas of relatively low selenium levels.
- . Animals may die because they cannot reach food and water.
- . One attack does not confer immunity.
- . Unfortunately, the plant does not grow in areas where stock are affected by low selenium levels, leading to “White Muscle Disease”.



Picture: *Morinda reticulata* ambg.gov.au

Further Reading:

- . Everist. Poisonous Plants. 1983.
- . McBarron. Medical and Veterinary Aspects of Plant Poisons in NSW. 1976.
- . Queensland Government Fact Sheet.