

Rhododendron spp

Common name:

Rhododendron, Azalea,

Palatability to Livestock:

Eaten occasionally.

Toxicity to Goats:

High risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Toxic to all livestock species, and domestic pets.

Poisonous Principle:

- . Tetracyclic polyyl acetylandromedol.
- . Modifies cell membrane sodium channels.
- . Rhodotoxin.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Loss of appetite, depression,
- . Repeated swallowing,
- . Excessive salivation, nasal discharge,
- . Bloating or vomiting,
- . Abdominal pain, frequent defaecation,
- . Difficulty in breathing,
- . Cardiac arrhythmia,
- . Skin and eye irritant.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Coma and death.
- . Sometimes recovery.

Treatment;

- . Try egg-white, milk and Epsom salts, as a drench, (Everist)
- . See Vet or Doctor.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . A garden plant.
- . Dispose of carefully or burn.
- . Do not feed any of these clippings to livestock.

Comments:

- . Rhododendrons, evergreen shrubs or trees, with leathery leaves, and showy flowers, tubular at the base. Grow in cooler climates.
- . Azaleas, evergreen or deciduous shrubs, with thinner leaves, and broad showy flowers with a shorter tube, more tolerant of warmer conditions.
- . Toxic to humans through honey from bees.
- . Leaves are shiny green, lance-shaped, rough and leathery.
- . Flowers are in many colours, bell shaped, in dense terminal clusters, spring to summer.
- . Seed capsules with many seeds.
- . All parts toxic, including the nectar.
- . Skin and eye irritant to humans.



Rhododendron flower



Picture: Helen Simmonds. Calga. NSW. Azalea
Azalea flowers

Further Reading:

- . Copeland. Poisonous Plants in Your Garden. 1997.
- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981.
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004.