

Sonchus spp

Common name:

Sow thistle, Milk thistle,

Palatability to Livestock:

High at all stages.

Toxicity to Goats:

Low risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Potentially toxic to sheep and cattle.

Poisonous Principle:

Nitrates.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Respiratory distress.
- . Darkening of the gums.

Health and Production Problems;

- . In extreme cases, slow recovery or death.

Treatment;

- . Be aware of potential stock problems.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Cultivation,
- . Use glyphosates,
- . Use goats.

Comments:

- . An upright, annual, bitter tasting thistle, with a taproot, and fibrous roots, growing up to one meter high.
- . Stem-clasping leaves are soft, green, smooth and hollow, with a milky juice; these leaves are alternate, coarsely toothed, spiny and twisted.
- . Stalks and stems also produce a milky sap when damaged.

- . Flowers are small yellow daisies, growing from spring to autumn, giving rise to puff balls of seeds.
- . A widespread weed of pastures, cultivation and gardens, as well as disturbed areas.
- . A native of Europe, now found all over Australia.



Picture: *Sonchus spp* Helen Simmonds, Calga. NSW.

Further Reading:

- . Huggins and Lucy. Weeds of Southern Qld. 1997.
- . Lamp and Collett. Field Guide to Weeds in Australia. 1976.
- . Roth. Weeds. Friend or Foe. 2001.
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000.