

## *Verbesina encelioides*

### **Common name:**

Crownbeard, Gold weed,  
Wild sunflower, South African daisy,  
American Dogweed,

### **Palatability to Livestock:**

Low, not eaten except when under drought or  
hunger stress.

### **Toxicity to Goats:**

Moderate.

### **Toxicity to Other Species:**

Potentially toxic to sheep, cattle and pigs.

### **Poisonous Principle:**

- . Galegine,
- . Unknown toxic glycosides,
- . Nitrates.

### **Effects:**

#### *Signs and Symptoms:*

- . Depression,
- . Rapid breathing and frothing at nostrils,
- . Bluish lips and gums, protruding tongue,
- . Sudden death.

#### *Health and Production Problems:*

- . Sudden death - heart failure.
- . Severe gastro-enteritis in pigs.
- . Old plants appear to be more toxic.
- . Light rain can make the plant more toxic.

#### *Treatment:*

- . Nil.

### **Integrated Control Strategy:**

- . Declared "Noxious" in parts of NSW.
- . Try 2-4-D. Herbicides make the plant more palatable, chip out.

### **Comments:**

. A hairy, erect, annual herb with stiff  
branched stems, growing to about a metre  
high.

- . Triangular leaves with toothed margins, are large and opposite on the lower parts of the stem, bluish dull green on the upper side, and whitish and hairy below, tapering to a tip.
- . Leaves become smaller, with toothed edges, as they reach the top.
- . The base of the leaf stalk has two small leaf-like wings.
- . Flowerheads are like small sunflowers, large and yellow, with lobed petals and a yellow centre.
- . Two different types of seeds are produced, flat and wrinkled, or thick.
- . Appears in spring, flowers in summer and seeds in autumn, growing in warmer months.
- . Drought resistant.
- . Native to North America, found in central Queensland, NSW and northern Victoria.
- . Deaths seem to occur after rain, and when the plants are old. Animals do not readily eat the plant, and then only when it is old and they are under stress.



Picture: *Verbesina encelioides*

### **Further Reading:**

- . Cunningham, Mulham, Milthorpe and Leigh. Plants of Western NSW. 1999
- . Dowling and McKenzie. Poisonous Plants. 1994
- . McBarron. Poisonous Plants, Handbook. 1983.
- . Mckenzie. Veterinary Clinical Toxicology. 2000.
- . Parsons and Cuthbertson. Noxious Plants of Australia. 2001.
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000