

Xanthium spinosum

Common name:

Bathurst burr, Spiny cocklebur,

Palatability to Livestock:

Seldom eaten.

Toxicity to Goats:

Moderate risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Potentially toxic to sheep, cattle and pigs.

Poisonous Principle:

- . Hydroquinone,
- . Carboxyatractyloside.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Acute liver poisoning,
- . Loss of appetite, depression,
- . Recumbency, muscle weakness,
- . Drooping head and ears, sagging of head,
- . Respiratory and cardiac failure.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Death, following clinical signs.
- . Some may recover, after many weeks.
- . A veg fault in fleece.

Treatment;

- . See Vet.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . A declared "Noxious" weed in Queensland.
- . Use herbicide.

Comments:

- . A bushy, upright, annual forb growing up to 60cms tall, reproducing by seed, which may remain dormant for several years.
- . Leaves are a shiny dark green, and have three distinct pointed lobes, with an obvious pale coloured mid-vein; they are 5-8cm long, paler underneath, and have yellow spines on the lobe tips.

- . Three branched spines occur on the stems adjacent to the leaf bases.
- . Flowers are insignificant, appearing in summer to autumn.
- . Male and female flowers grow separately, females in leaf axils, and males mostly on the branch tips.
- . Fruits are oblong, yellowish burrs, one cm long, covered in hooked spines.
- . The plant grows in the warmer season, and produces burrs in autumn, with a three year viability.



Picture: *Xanthium spinosum*



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Further Reading:

- . Cunningham, Mulham Milthorpe and Leigh. Plants of Western NSW. 1999.
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- . Huggins and Lucy. Weeds of Southern Queensland. 1994.
- . Landcare Note. Victoria.
- . Parsons and Cuthbertson. Noxious Weeds of Australia. 2001.
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000.