

## *Abrus precatorius*

### **Common name:**

Gidee Gidee, Crab's Eye,  
Jequerity Beans, Indian Liquorice,

### **Palatability to Livestock:**

Unknown.

### **Toxicity to Goats:**

Low risk.

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

- . Potentially toxic to livestock, humans and domestic pets.
- . Seed coat must be cracked to release toxin.

### **Poisonous Principle:**

- . Abrin, a toxalbumen, (heat will destroy this).
- . Glycoproteins and other toxins.

### **Effects:**

#### *Signs and Symptoms:*

- . Intestinal irritation,
- . Problems with balance and circulation,
- . May cause dermatitis to susceptible people,
- . Conjunctivitis and/or blindness can occur after contact with the eyes.

#### *Health and Production Problems:*

- . Be aware of potential risks.

#### *Treatment:*

- . See Doctor or Vet.

### **Integrated Control Strategy:**

- . Be aware of potential health problems.

### **Comments:**

- . A native plant, found in Qld, WA, and NT.
- . Many other spp found in other countries.
- . Common in the tropics and sub-tropics of Australia, preferring sandy soil and beaches, also found in gardens.
- . A perennial, deciduous, twining vine, with alternate pinnate leaves. The bright green leaflets are opposite on the stalk.

- . Small pink, pea-shaped flowers appear in stalked clusters on short stalks, from summer to winter, (in the wet seasons).
- . The oblong pods are about four cms long, and when these split open, there are two rows of bright red seeds, each with a black spot.
- . The Aborigines used the seeds for decoration, or in necklaces.
- . There is also a white seeded variety.
- . Seed coat must be cracked to allow the toxin to be absorbed into the digestive system. One ruptured seed contains enough toxin to kill a human.
- . Abrin is not readily absorbed through the gut, but will cause severe irritation of the mucous membranes.
- . There is usually a delay of 12 – 72 hours between ingestion and onset of symptoms, but symptoms can appear within half an hour.
- . Seeds have been used as a unit of weight.



Picture: *Abrus precatorius* Wikipedia.

### **Further Reading:**

- . Cribb and Cribb. Wild Medicine in Australia. 1990.
- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia.. 1981.
- . Covacevich, Davie, and Pearn. Toxic Plants and Animals. A Guide for Australia. 1987.
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004
- . Stinginga, Poisonous Plants, Home/Garden/Bush. 2002