

Acacia georginae

Common name:

Georgina gidgee,

Palatability to Livestock:

Seldom eaten.

Toxicity to Goats:

High risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Cattle, sheep, horses and donkeys.

Poisonous Principle:

Fluroacetates.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Rapid breathing,
- . Trembling,
- . Heart failure, or heart irregularities,
- . Moderate bloat, and frequent urination,
- . Animals are likely to die within minutes, after onset of symptoms.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Most deaths occur during the Dry Season.
- . Strongest animals are most likely to be affected, maybe they are the “pushiest”, and first to eat the leaves.
- . Keep animals away from known trees.

Treatment;

- . Handle stock very quietly if it is suspected that they have been eating gidgee.
- . After eating this plant, drinking and driving the stock hasten the onset of symptoms.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Not feasible.

Comments:

- . A large shrub or small tree with crooked branches, up to seven metres tall,
- . Often seen with several trunks.
- . Bark is fissured, flakey and dark grey.

- . Leaves are alternate, hard and thick, grey-green, tapering at both ends.
- . Flowers are small yellow globular heads, growing in the forks of the leaves.
- . Smells of rotten onions when the air is damp.
- . Pods are curved into an arc, and flat, criss-crossed with veins.
- . Native animals seem to have developed some immunity to the toxin.
- . Intermittently toxic in many areas, although not predictable which areas, and which season.
- . Trees are normally browsed as a source of green feed, but the high tannin content prevents them from being first choice for livestock.
- . Parts containing the most toxins are the seeds, then the pods, and then the leaves.
- . Fresh shoots are also toxic.
- . Found in north west Queensland and in the adjacent eastern Northern Territory,
- . A similar plant *Acacia cambagei* or Gidyea, grows in southern Queensland, with similar growth pattern and similar pods, but is not known to be toxic.
- . Trials of genetically modified rumen bacteria to be used for the protection of cattle and sheep against fluroacetate poisoning are being carried out, and are nearing completion. Safety issues concerning livestock and native wildlife are a major concern.



Picture: *A. georginae* anbg.gov.au flowers

Further Reading;

- . Everist S. Poisonous Plants of Australia 1981
- . Dowling and McKenzie. Poisonous Plants, Field Guide. Qld DPI. 1993
- . McKenzie. Veterinary Clinical Toxicology. 2000.