

Amaranthus spp

Common name:

Amarynth, Redroot,

Palatability to Livestock:

Moderate at all stages.

Toxicity to Goats:

Low risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Toxic to cattle and sheep.

Poisonous Principle:

Nitrates and oxalates.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Nitrate poisoning causes respiratory distress, darkening of the gums, and rapid death.
- . Acute oxalate poisoning causes muscle tremors, staggering gait, collapse and rapid death.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Chronic kidney disease with associated ill-thrift is possible when large amounts of these plants are eaten over a long period.
- . Alternately, kidney disease can sometimes develop for a different reason, within 7 – 14 days, when large amounts of these plants are ingested.

Treatment;

- . Try large doses of Vitamin C, as well as dolomite.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Let goats onto this weed, provided there is plenty of alternate feed.
- . Shade out with trees and shrubs.
- . Hand pull into disposable bags.
- . Chemical control with glyphosates.

Comments:

- . There are hundreds of species, many are weeds of disturbed ground.
- . Erect, branched, perennial plants, growing to about a metre tall.
- . Succulent when young, but becoming brittle with age.
- . Leaves are lance-shaped and dark green, and both leaves and stems have a reddish tinge.
- . Flowers in summer, in dense finger-like spikes, flowers are small and greenish.
- . Reproduces by seed.
- . The main growth is in summer and autumn.
- . Occurs over most of eastern Australia, mainly on waste areas and disturbed sites, or in natural pasture.
- . This plant is not dangerous under normal conditions, but in dry times with scarce feed, it may be dangerous to stock.



Picture: *Amaranthus spp*

Helen Simmonds. Calga NSW.

Further Reading:

- . Auld and Medd. Weeds. 1992.
- . Everist. Poisonous Plants in Australia. 1981.
- . McBarron. Poisonous Plants. Handbook. 1983.
- . Swarbrick and Skarratt. Bushweed 2 Database. 1994