

## *Cucumis myriocarpus*

### **Common name:**

Paddy melon, Prickly paddy melon.

### **Palatability to Livestock:**

- . Moderate.
- . Minimise grazing of fruit.

### **Toxicity to Goats:**

Low risk.

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

- . Potentially toxic to sheep, cattle, horses and pigs. Ruminants most affected.
- . Circumstantial evidence, nothing proven.

### **Poisonous Principle:**

- . Tetracyclic triterpenes.

### **Effects:**

- Signs and symptoms;*
- . Severe diarrhoea.

### *Health and Production Problems;*

- . Sometimes rapid death, without diarrhoea.

### *Treatment;*

- . Be aware of potential stock problems.
- . The bitter flavour appears to be addictive to some animals.

### **Integrated Control Strategy:**

- . Use goats.
- . Herbicides, heavy grazing, and cultivation.
- . This is a declared "Noxious Weed" in parts of Western Australia.

### **Comments:**

- . Rarely eaten by livestock, which minimises the number of stock poisoned.
- . A summer growing annual vine, with rough stems, about 2 metres long, with tendrils, and a slender tap-root.

. The leaves are divided into five lobes, and hairy underneath, alternate, dark to yellowish green, rough, with one prominent central vein and numerous side veins; leaves are on slender stalks.

. Pale yellow flowers on stalks in small groups in the leaf axils.

. The plant has both male and female flowers.

. The fruits are globular, about three cms in diameter, light and dark green stripes, turning yellow at maturity. They are covered in soft, hooked bristles.

. Fruit is bitter and acts as an emetic.

. Seeds are embedded in a pale green pulp.

. Infests pasture and cultivated areas during the warmer months of the year.

. Ripe fruits are the most toxic, but unpalatable.

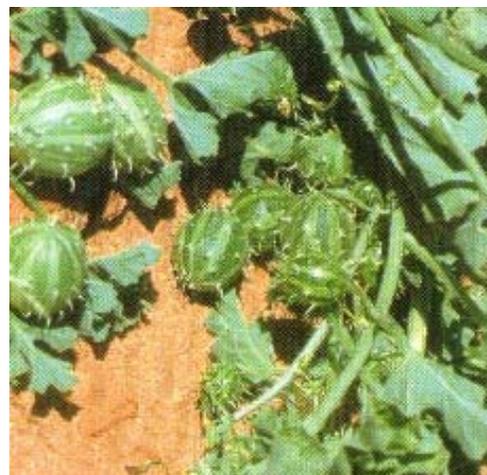
. Often abundant after summer rain.

. Affected animals never recover. Horses may develop an addiction to the melon.

. Animals may also become deaf, or blind.

. **NB.** Feeding trials have all proved negative.

. Native to eastern Africa, found all over Australia.



Picture: *Cucumis myriocarpus* The Glove Box Guide

### **Further Reading:**

- . Auld and Medd. Weeds. 1992
- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981
- . Henry, Hall, Jordan, Milson, Scheffand Silcock. Pasture Plants of Southern Inland Queensland.. 1995
- . Kohnke. Feeding and Nutrition of Horses. 1998
- . Lamp and Collett. Weeds. 1976
- . McBarron. Poisonous Plants, Handbook. 1983
- . McKenzie. Veterinary Clinical Toxicology. 2000