

Dendrocnide spp

Common name:

Stinging tree.

Palatability to Livestock:

Unlikely.

Toxicity to Goats:

High.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Toxic to livestock and humans.

Poisonous Principle:

- . Haemolytic saponins, and morodoin,
- . Unknown toxins,
- . Stinging hairs contain acetylcholine, histamine and 5 hydroxy tryptomine.

Effects:

Signs and Symptoms:

- . Severe and painful skin irritation.
- . Horses are particularly vulnerable.
- . Local sweating and itchy pain.

Health and Production Problems:

- . Pain is intolerable and long-lasting, and recurs when the affected part is washed, even weeks later.

Treatment:

- . Anti-histamine cream immediately.
- . Cunjevoi juice may also help.

Integrated Control Strategy:

Not feasible.

Comments:

- . Five spp in Australia, found from Cape York to Kiama and Nepean area in NSW.
- . *D photinophylla*, Shiny-leaf stinger, to Nepean
- . *D excelsa*, Giant stinger, to Kiama.
- . Grows on the edges of rain forests, and in clearings.
- . Large trees, grey bark, soft spongy wood.

- . Leaves are large, heart shaped, with two rounded lobes at the base, margins may be toothed, and young leaves are covered with large, stiff, stinging hairs.
- . Flowers are insignificant, yellowish green, male and female on separate trees, from summer to autumn.
- . Some spp have small berries similar to raspberries. All fruits are edible, but should have the hairs removed before eating.
- . The nut is small and black, with a single seed, on a succulent, pale stalk, covered with stinging hairs.
- . Irritant toxins are injected through the skin by hollow plant hairs.
- . Timber workers and bush walkers may be affected.
- . Horses are particularly vulnerable and may be in a frenzy of agony and have to be euthanased.
- . Pain may persist for several weeks.
- . Dried plant retains toxicity (for over 40 years).
- . There is no satisfactory relief.



Picture: *Dendrocnide* spp

Further Reading:

- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981.
- . McKenzie. Veterinary Clinical Toxicology. 2000
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004,
- . Steginger. Poisonous Plants, Home, Garden, Bush. 2003