Digitalis purpurea

Common name:
Foxglove,

Palatability to Livestock:
Not known to be eaten.

Toxicity to Goats:
High risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:
Toxic to all livestock, and humans, and pets**.**

Poisonous Principle:
Cardiac glycocides, digitoxin.

Effects:
Signs and symptoms;
. Depression,
. Diarrhoea,
. Slow irregular heart beat,
. Drowsiness, loss of appetite, convulsions.

Health and Production Problems;
. Sudden death in some cases.
. Little effect in others until mustered, when they succumb.

Treatment;
See Vet.

Integrated Control Strategy:
. Weed into disposable bags.
. Do not feed to any livestock.
. Spot spray if necessary.

Comments:
. Garden plant.
. Ruminants, such as the goat, are generally more tolerant of this type of plant poison than are horses.
. Digitoxin is a more powerful cardiac toxin to all animal species than other cardiac glycocides.

. If the plant is fed as a contaminant in hay, or garden clippings, problems will occur.
. Annual, biennial or short lived perennial robust garden plant, lower leaves on long stalks, upper leaves on very short stalks.
. Plants are similar to comfrey in their first year. Flowers occur in the second year, purple to white, spotted, thimble like and drooping, in long racemes.
. The leaves are soft, hairy and toothed, growing from a basal rosette, at first.
. The upper leaves are the more toxic, and at their most toxic before the seeds ripen.
. This plant does not seem to be palatable, to stock, and poisoning occurs with hay contamination.
. Spread by seed, and needs little soil to survive. Grow in wall crevices, roadsides, and pastures.

Picture: *Digitalis* - flowers

Further Reading:
. Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981.
. Kohnke. Feeding and Nutrition of Horses.1998.
. McBarron. . Medical and Veterinary Aspects of Plant Poisons. 1976.
. Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000.
. Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004.