**Erethrina spp**

**Common name:**
Coral tree, Corkwood,

**Palatability to Livestock:**
High at all stages.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
Low risk.

**Toxicity to Other Species:**
Potentially toxic to sheep and cattle, and suspected of having a narcotic effect on horses.

**Poisonous Principle:**
- Isoquinoline alkaloids have a curare-like action when injected, but almost non-toxic when eaten.
- Bark, leaves and seeds are all toxic.
- Indole and isoquinoline derivatives may cause hallucinogenic reactions.

**Effects:**

*Signs and Symptoms:*
- Affected animals may become comatose,
- Nervous signs, brain damage,
- Sudden death within 24 hours on ingestion,
- Seeds cause diarrhoea and vomiting in children,
- Leaves and bark reported to contain a compound which causes depression of the CNS.
- Seeds of several spp are reported to have been used as hallucinogens.

*Health and Production Problems:*
- Affected animals usually die.
- In *humans*, scratches fester easily.

*Treatment:*
- Be aware of potential stock problems.

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
- Use goats to ringbark trees and eat the foliage.
- Cut stump and inject with herbicide.

**Comments:**
- A garden variety gone feral.
- Goats have a preference for all varieties of erythrina, and will eradicate this species if allowed, by eating the leaves and suckers, and eventually ringbarking the trunks.

. There are four spp native to Australia, and about ten introduced spp.
. Large bushes, to semi-evergreen trees with a stout thorny trunk, up to 18 metres high.
. Very soft wood full of water, causing branches to suddenly break off due to the weight of water contained.
. The compound leaves are trifoliate, with oval pointed leaflets.
. Long racemes of orange-red and black pea-shaped flowers appear at the ends of bare branches at the end of winter.
. Propagated by seed, suckers and cuttings. Even the felled trees will sprout for several years until dried out.
. In *humans*, some species will cause painful reactions to scratches by the thorns.
. The poisonous principles are not readily absorbed into the bloodstream from the gut, therefore large amounts must be eaten to cause a reaction.
*E. vespertilio*, an Australian spp has been known to poison cattle.
*E. coralloidendron*, has a narcotic effect on horses.

Pictures: *Erethrina spp* Helen Simmonds, Calga, NSW.

**References:**
- Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997