

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 trifoliolate, 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. vesperitlio*, an Australian spp has been known to poison cattle.
- . *E. coraliodendron*, has a narcotic effect on horses.



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

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