

Tribulus terrestris

Common name:

Caltrop, Cat-head, Puncture vine,
Tar vine,

Palatability to Livestock:

Low, only if other fodder is not available.

Toxicity to Goats:

Moderate risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Toxic to sheep.

Poisonous Principle:

. Saponins, beta-carboline alkaloids, and nitrates.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Photosensitization,
- . Staggers,
- . Nitrate poisoning.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Progressive weakness of the legs,
- . “Yellow Big-head” disease.

Treatment;

- . Affected animals should be given shade and water.
- . Limit access by removal of either the weed, or the stock.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Frequent cultivation, prickle rollers.
- . Herbicides, spot spray to prevent seeding.
- . Do not graze dense growth.

Comments:

- . Summer growing, creeping, annual, or short lived perennial, hairy herb, with elongated prostrate branches, with pink to orange stems.
- . Leaves have 4-8 oblong leaflets, opposite, arranged in 2 rows, variable in size.

- . Single flowers in spring to autumn, deep yellow, five petals, on short stalks in leaf axils.
- . Slightly hairy, hard, star-shaped fruits, in late summer, each burr has 5 segments with 2 long spines on each segment.
- . Variation in size and shape of fruit and spines.
- . Found in all mainland states.
- . A pioneer plant after drought or overgrazing.
- . Rarely grazed, only when other feed is scarce.
- . Can cause “staggers”, mainly in southern states, or photosensitization in sheep and goats – after eating wilted plants during hot weather.



Picture: *Tribulus terrestris*

Further Reading:

- . Auld and Medd. Weeds. 1992
- . Dowling and McKenzie. Poisonous Plants. 1993.
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- . Harden. Flora of NSW. 1992.
- . Henry, Hall, Jordan, Milson, Sclafe and Silcock. Pasture Plants of Southern Inland Qld. 1995
- . McBarron. Poisonous Plants, Handbook.1983.
- . Parsons and Cuthbertson. Noxious Weeds of Australia. 2001.
- . Simmonds Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000
- . Swarbrick and Skarratt. Bushweed 2 Database. 1994.