

Bladderpod *Glottidium vesicarium*



Robust annual, 1 to 4 m tall, often becoming quite woody at base. Leaves alternate, deciduous, compound, 10 to 20 cm long, evenly pinnate with 24 to 52 leaflets. Flowers yellow or sometimes pinkish or purplish in clusters of two or more on long slender stalks. Pod flattened, swollen, ends pointed, 5 to 8 cm long, two seeds per pod. Found in Coastal Plain, North Carolina to Florida to Texas; most abundant in moist, fertile soil in waste places, along ditches, and in pastures.

Toxicity

Saponins have been detected in this plant. Cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, and hogs have all been poisoned from consuming the seeds and green plant. The green seeds are the most toxic part.

While the plant seems to be distasteful to some animals, others appear to develop a craving for the seeds even when other forage is available. Poisoning most often occurs in the fall or early winter when pasture or other feed is in short supply. Animals are often affected when they are first placed in pastures containing the plants.

Symptoms

Sheep and cattle exhibit hemorrhagic diarrhea, shallow and rapid respiration, and fast irregular pulse; they become comatose before death. Affected cattle may become constipated.

Postmortem examination reveals hemorrhages in the abomasum and intestines, rumen stasis, and dark tarry blood. The rumen usually contains seeds of the plant.

Treatment

Remove all animals immediately from pastures containing the plant and confine them to clean pastures or a dry lot. Provide general supportive treatment, including saline laxatives, rumen stimulants, and intravenous fluid therapy. Specific antidote is dilute vinegar for saponins in the early stages of toxicosis.