
Mexican pricklepoppy *Argemone mexicana*



Annual or biennial herb, 3 to 9 m tall, more or less spiny; plant sap bright yellow. Leaves alternate, glaucous, auriculate-clasping, sessile, lanceolate to obovate, 7 to 20 cm long, 3 to 9 cm wide, coarsely pinnately cleft or parted; margins spinose dentate. Flowers showy on very short stalks; corolla bright or rarely pale yellow; petals 3 to 5 cm wide. Found throughout

most of the South; mostly in sandy roadsides, waste places, and fields. (Bluestem pricklepoppy, *A. intermedia*, is shown.)

Toxicity

The alkaloids berberine and protopine are contained in the entire plant. In addition, the seeds contain sanguinarine and dihydrosanguinarine. If seeds are consumed in sufficient quantities, livestock, humans, and chickens can be poisoned. One ounce of seed causes symptoms in poultry, and 2 ounces usually produce death.

Symptoms

In humans and chickens, widespread edema (dropsy) is the main symptom. In chickens, wattles swell, the tips of the comb darken, and egg production decreases. Other symptoms in chickens are weakness, hemorrhagic enteritis, and death.

Treatment

Nonspecific. Give diuretics to livestock.