

Red buckeye *Aesculus pavia*



Shrub or sometimes a small tree, to 4 m tall. Leaves opposite, palmately compound; leaflets 6 to 17 cm long, 3 to 6 cm wide. Flowers showy, scarlet, 2.5 to 4 cm long, borne in large, terminal panicles. Fruit leathery, 3.5 to 6 cm broad, splitting at maturity, with one to four, shiny tan or light brown seeds, to 4 cm in diameter. Found through-

out the South, but most abundant in Coastal Plain; in moist, fertile soils of deciduous forests. [Inset: open fruit]

Toxicity

The glycoside aesculin has been detected in the buckeye sprout, young leaves, and the mature seed. Humans and all classes of livestock can be affected by ingestion of the buckeye. Cattle are most frequently affected, usually by consuming young shoots and leaves in the early springtime.

Symptoms

Generally, symptoms are drunkenness, trembling, muscular weakness, and incoordination, with affected animal having extreme difficulty going downhill. Other symptoms include vomiting, irritated mucous membranes, and paralysis.

Treatment

Normally, no treatment is required. If animals are removed from infested areas, they will usually recover.