

Redroot pigweed *Amaranthus retroflexus*



Large, coarse annual herb, 1 to 1.5 m tall. Leaves alternate, simple, elliptic to lanceolate, 8 to 15 cm long, tapered at both ends. Flowers green, inconspicuous, borne in short, compact panicles interspersed with long, green floral bracts. Seeds small, lenticular, less than 1 mm long. Found throughout the South; particularly common in cultivated fields, barnyards, and waste places.

Toxicity

This plant may accumulate nitrates after treatment with herbicides such as 2,4-D and also after heavy nitrogen fertilization. This plant also becomes more palatable after treatment with herbicides. Cattle, sheep, and other ruminants are susceptible.

Symptoms

Symptoms suddenly appear 5 to 10 days after animals consume plants. Animals exhibit weakness, trembling,

and incoordination. In 48 hours, symptoms progress rapidly from knuckling of posterior to paralysis, sternal recumbency, and death.

Another syndrome in swine and cattle occurs in which incoordination is followed closely by coma and death. Necropsy examination reveals degeneration of the brain and edema in the kidney region with degeneration of the kidney tubules.

Treatment

To treat non-nitrate type toxicosis, use mineral-corticoid hormones, IV calcium gluconate to normalize ECG, and dextrose IV.