

Cocklebur

Xanthium strumarium

Family; Asteraceae

Common Names: Ditch Bur, Sheep Bur, Button Bur, Clotbur

Species Affected: Pigs, Equines, Chickens, Cattle

Toxin: Carboxyatractloside, a highly toxic glycoside.

Description: Coarse, herbaceous, annual growing up 3ft-5ft tall. Erect, stout, branching stems, with alternate leaves, pointed, 2 with toothed lobed margins. The flowerheads lack colored rays, and are separated into small, many flowered male heads, clustered at the leaf axils.

Growing Locations: Flooded plains, pastures, rangeland, road sides, moving water.

Most Toxic When: Concentrated on the seeds and seedlings.

Signs and Symptoms: Widely known as a livestock poison, it produces symptoms including loss of appetite, digestive tract inflammation, excitement, weakness, loss of coordination, prostration, and in severe cases, convulsions and death. Human poisonings have not been reported but children should be kept away, it is known to cause skin irritations on contact.

Preventative Measures:

Mechanical– Cocklebur plants reproduce easily by seed, which are generally dispersed on water. The seed can lie dormant in the soil for up to three years before ideal conditions cause it to germinate. Yanking out every small seedling as they appear is one option.

Chemical– To treat new or established cockleburs, treat during the spring and early summer, such as May to June when cockleburs are relatively young and have not yet produced seeds.

please check the PNW weed management handbook for further chemical control recommendations

