

Death Camas

Toxicoscordion venenosum

Family; Melanthiaceae (Bunchflower Family)

Common Names: Hog Potato , Grassy Death

Species Affected: Horses, Cows, Sheep, Alpacas, Llamas, and Chickens

Toxin: Neurotoxic Alkaloids

Description: 1-2 and half feet tall. Onion-like bulbs. Basal leaves (thicker) v shaped and linear. Unbranched stems with pink to greenish-white inflorescence. Flowers grouped towards the top of the stems. Can be confused with wild onion or lilies .

Growing Locations: Typically not found growing in large infestations. Found in open plains and hillsides, usually along with Low Larkspur, another toxic plant.

Most Toxic When: In the spring, due to Death Camas emerging earlier than palatable forage. Toxic when dried and in hay. Sheep are more likely to ingest Death Camas when soils are moist and the bulbs can easily be pulled from the ground, or when moving through an area and not able to find palatable forage.

Signs and Symptoms: Excessive foamy salivation. Vomiting in cows, colic in equines, frequent urination? Defecation, convulsions, staggering, rapid/weak pulse and respiration. Small doses of Death Camas can lead to reduced milk production and weight gain. **Death can occur within days after first ingestion of 0.5%-2% of the animals body weight.**

Preventative Measures: Avoid grazing pastures with Death Camas early in the spring, wait until good palatable forage is plentiful.

Mechanical– Digging up Death Camas when the soil is damp is effective however, the entire plant must be removed. Mowing may slow growth but will not stop it.

Chemical- Recommended herbicides are 2 4-D, Imazapyr, and Imazapic. Post emergence applications.

