

# Heart-leaf poison bush

*Gastrolobium grandiflorum*



## Description and general information

Heart-leaf poison bush is a woody perennial shrub 1–2 m high with several woody stems growing from a lignotuber or 'bulb' just below ground level. Heart-leaf poison bush is a legume which usually grows into a rounded shrub.

The leaves are greyish-green and usually opposite, 2.5– 6.4 cm long, 1–2.7 cm wide; with the ends varying from rounded to indented.

The leaves are tapered at the base, rather thick and stiff in texture with prominent yellow veins, particularly on the lower surface. The leaves on seedlings are hairy and heart-shaped. The pea-shaped flowers are 2–2.5 cm long and dark red to purplish in colour. The small yellowish-brown pods are pointed at the tip, hairy and usually contain one or two seeds about the size of a sweet-pea.

## Declaration details

Heart-leaf poison bush is not declared under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*, however, plants that are not declared under state legislation may have control requirements imposed by local governments.

## Distribution and habitat

Heart-leaf poison bush is a native plant and is known in other states as desert poison bush (Central Australia) and wallflower poison bush (Western Australia). It extends from the Hamersley Range in Western Australia through the Northern Territory to Cape York Peninsula and the central highlands of Queensland.

Its occurrence is sporadic, mainly in creamy to red sandy clay soils in eucalypt woodland, often with spinifex *Triodia* spp. The habitat slopes gently to shallow gullies that receive run-off water.

## Toxicity

The leaves, flowers and seeds are toxic to grazing animals. The plant contains high levels (105-185 ppm) of monofluoroacetic acid (1080 poison).

In the field, deaths in sheep and cattle are usually very rapid and animals are often found dead. Symptoms, which may be precipitated by exercise, fright or excitement, may not show until several hours after animals have been exposed to the plant but it is often only minutes between the onset of symptoms and death.

## Control

The best approach is to combine different methods. Control may include; herbicide, mechanical, fire and biological methods; combined with land management changes. The control methods you choose should suit the specific weed and your particular situation.

Plants may be grubbed and burnt after allowing them to dry out. It is essential to remove them completely or plants will regenerate from 'bulb' fragments. Seeds will germinate on the site for several years. The seedlings must be grubbed or sprayed if the effort of controlling the parent shrub is not to be wasted.

Overall spraying the plant with diesel will stop stock from feeding on the plant. This treatment can cause death of the plant but in some circumstances the tree will regrow.

## Further information

Further information is available from your local government office, or by contacting Biosecurity Queensland (call 13 25 23 or visit our website at [www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au)).

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Fact sheets are available from Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) service centres and our Customer Service Centre (telephone 13 25 23). Check our website at [www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au) to ensure you have the latest version of this fact sheet. The control methods referred to in this fact sheet should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation, and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the use of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, DAFF does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.