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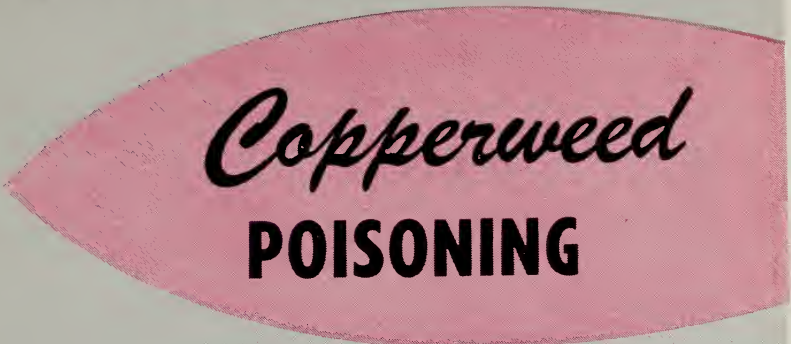
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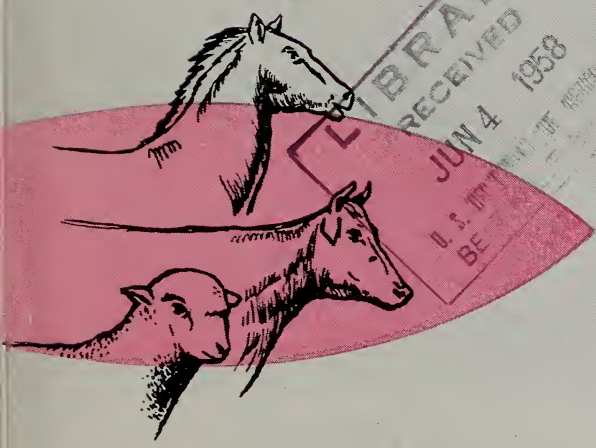
REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from



Copperweed POISONING

in the Western States



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REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

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Copperweed
POISONING

in the Western States

Cattle and sheep may be poisoned by feeding on copperweed¹ when other feed is scarce. Cattle are likely to eat the plants in the fall, when they are being trailed from the summer range; sheep are occa-

sionally poisoned in the fall and winter by eating dry leaves that have fallen to the ground. Most losses occur in cattle. Copperweed is dangerous at all times, but leaves are particularly toxic at maturity.

Where and When It Grows

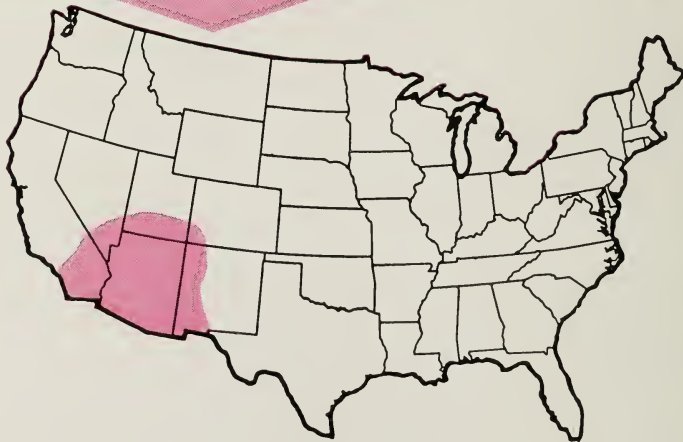
Copperweed is found in the Colorado River drainage area—from southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah to southern California. The plants grow along old stream beds or gullies, where mois-

ture is plentiful and the soils are usually high in salt.

Copperweed is a perennial plant; it starts growth in the spring, and the flowers appear during July and August.

¹ *Oxytenia acerosa*.

DISTRIBUTION OF COPPERWEED



Plant sketch from W. C. Muenscher, *Poisonous Plants of the United States*, The MacMillan Company, 1951



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Copperweed may reach a height of 3 to 5 feet. A large number of stems usually grow from the crown, and show little branching. The leaves are deeply cut into 3 or 5 long, narrow sections. The small flowering heads are orange-yellow when mature. It belongs to the sunflower family.

How It Affects Livestock

A 100-pound animal will usually die in 1 to 3 days if it eats about a half-pound of green copperweed leaves.

The following are symptoms of copperweed poisoning:



1. Loss of appetite
2. Depression
3. Weakness
4. Usually some struggling
5. Coma

How To Reduce Livestock Losses

Animals will seldom eat a toxic amount of copperweed if other forage is available. To reduce losses, provide adequate forage at all times. You can do this by careful herding and good range management. Supplemental feeding is

beneficial before animals are driven through heavily infested copperweed ranges.

There is no effective treatment for copperweed poisoning. On some ranges, it may be practicable to eradicate the plants by grubbing.

Where To Obtain More Information

You can obtain more information from your county agricultural agent, your State agricultural experiment station, or the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Consult your local veterinarian if you have

questions regarding the treatment of affected animals. *Note:* The map on page 2 shows areas where most livestock poisoning has been reported. It is possible that copperweed grows in other areas.

Know Poisonous Plants • Reduce Livestock Losses

Prepared by the Animal Disease and Parasite Research Division, Agricultural Research Service. Acknowledgment is made to the staff of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

Washington, D. C.

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