



# Desert Baileya

*Baileya multiradiata*

An annual or weak perennial herb of the sunflower family, desert bailey grows to 1 to 1.5 feet tall. Leaves are arranged alternately along the stem and covered with woolly hairs.

The showy yellow flowers rise on long stalks from a leafy base. Desert bailey blooms from spring through late fall.

## Distribution and habitat

Desert bailey is generally confined to desert regions from Texas to southern California and south into Mexico. Most often found on sandy/gravelly soils and dry plains and mesas up to 5,000 feet in elevation, the plant is also common on disturbed areas. Regions: 7, 10.

## Toxic agent

The toxic agent is an unknown water-soluble compound. All parts of a green or dried plant are poisonous; flowers and seed heads are more toxic than leaves.

Sheep, goats and rabbits have been poisoned experimentally by desert bailey, although under range conditions only sheep are poisoned. Feeding trials suggest that 16 to 65 pounds of dry or green desert bailey are lethal to an adult sheep.

Although sheep eat bailey more readily when range feed is

scarce, they have grazed it extensively when ample green grass was available. They appear to relish the flowers and seed heads.

## Livestock signs

The first sign of poisoning in sheep is a frothy green salivation, followed by extreme weakness, a rapid heartbeat and trembling limbs. Under range conditions, poisoned animals may trail the flock with a stiff gait and show marked weakness. Other signs include:

- Rapid, pounding heart rate, audible without a stethoscope
- Trembling and loss of appetite
- Standing with back arched
- Lying down, unresponsive

## Integrated management strategies

Graze problem areas with cattle only. Remove sheep and goats from infested pastures as soon as clinical signs are noticed, provide supplemental feed and good quality water and keep them calm.

Sheep poisoned by desert bailey may refuse to eat for a few days, but most regain their appetite and recover. Losses from desert bailey generally occur when other feed is short or when sheep are trailed through dense stands.

Because sheep like the flowers and seed heads, do not graze them in pastures with dense stands of desert bailey. Sheep losses from this plant in Presidio County were between \$50,000 and \$100,000 annually in 1958 and 1959.

Chemical and mechanical controls tend to be impractical. Losses can best be minimized through good livestock management.



Flower ↗

Whole plant ↓

